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HELLENISTIC POETRY

HELLENISTIC POETRY

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NEW YORK
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY PRESS
1929

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COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY PRESS

Published June 1929

23269

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
THE PLIMPTON PRESS · NORWOOD · MASS.

To

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As Scholars and Friends

PREFACE

Professor Körte did a great service to the general public in German-speaking countries — or as much of it as is still interested in the history of literature but only slightly, if at all, acquainted with Greek — by producing a really readable account of the later period of Greek poetry, with copious examples, in translation, of the various types which are still represented to us by actual remains of considerable length. Now Dr. Hammer and Mr. Hadas have done a similar service in making this admirable work accessible in English by their excellent translation.

The author adopts the term "Hellenistic," current for the last ninety years, to designate the period from 321 B.C., when Menander, then only twenty-one years old, produced at Athens his first comedy, to the beginning of the reign of Augustus. Naturally the end of a "period" of literature is often less easy to determine than its beginning, because types once introduced may be perpetuated, though in constantly diminishing importance, long after newer forms have assumed the chief place. Perhaps the best example of this is the "epigram," which remained a favorite form of composition in Ancient Greek even after the spoken language had entered the stage known as Modern Greek. Other forms of poetry, particularly the lyric, both the choral and the "in-

dividual," died out almost completely; and it is highly significant that we find extremely few remains of Greek lyric poetry in the manner of the older poets, while Romans such as Horace, Catullus, Tibullus, Propertius, and Martial, imitated the Greek lyrists of the great period with singular skill. But the final incorporation of the Ptolemaic kingdom of Egypt into the Roman Empire was so nearly coincident with the mighty development of Latin literature — a development which quite overshadowed the Greek literature of the time — that this date may reasonably be taken as marking the close of the Hellenistic Period. The coincidence of the period with the duration of the kingdom established in Egypt by Alexander, with its capital at Alexandria, is so close that it is equally well called the Alexandrian. The first great name in this period, however, one of the greatest it has to show, is that of the Athenian Menander; and it is a striking fact that thereafter no Athenian plays a really important part in the history of Greek poetry.

The Hellenistic period has received comparatively little attention from historians of literature. The reasons are perhaps not far to seek. There were no longer any such writers as those whose genius had created the great epic, lyric, tragedy, comedy, history, oratory — least of all, the marvelous union of poetic vision, profound thought, and fascinating beauty of style which we find in Plato.[1] The older

[1] Professor Shorey has well said that Plato is "an exception to all limiting generalizations."

forms had become nearly if not entirely obsolete; tragedies, for example, were still written and performed, but apparently none of great value. It is significant that we know of not one great tragedy written after Aristotle had published his *Art of Poetry*, which deals so minutely and acutely with tragic composition. Of course one must beware of sweeping statements about a literature which has been so imperfectly preserved to us as the Greek. The losses have been almost incredibly great. The tremendous eagerness shown by Alexandrian and Pergamene sovereigns in the collection of manuscripts for incorporation in their huge libraries proves how fully they realized the importance of haste before it should be too late to save what still remained.

Professor Körte has skilfully brought out the rapidly increasing artificiality of emotion and sentiment in this Hellenistic-Alexandrian literature, the development of a "learned" style in place of the genuine feeling of earlier writers, and the close connection of their works with the actual life of the communities in which they lived. The savant is rarely an inspired poet or dramatist. Even Aristotle is no exception to the general rule, if the few remaining scraps of his verse suffice to reveal his poetic skill to us; and Wilamowitz-Moellendorff's dry remark, "The Muses kissed him not," is just. So the chief tendencies in this age were quite other than in the literature of the earlier centuries; and although, as Professor Körte carefully reminds us, the Greek civilization of the second and third centuries B.C. was

more nearly akin to our own than that of earlier times had been, yet the vastly greater originality and freshness of the older literature, its freedom from pedantry and affectation, gave it a hold upon the attention of modern readers and students which the Hellenistic authors could not secure. But for all that, these did not quite deserve the comparative neglect which has been their fate in modern times. Very few helps have been available for the reader who is not a professed scholar, and particularly little in English; and almost everything that has been published is highly technical, and sometimes hard reading for even the seasoned classicist.

To give in brief compass a readable yet just and scholarly résumé of so long a literary period is no mean achievement; to provide one's readers with reasonably copious extracts, in translation, from the writers chosen for treatment is quite another, and hardly less arduous task. At once the everlasting difficulty presents itself: Shall verse be rendered in verse, with the inevitable sacrifice of accuracy, or in prose, with equally inevitable sacrifice of the beauty of verse? In the translation of ancient into modern verse there is the further danger arising from the profound difference (seldom sufficiently realized) between the quantitative verse of the ancients and the ictus-verse of modern poetry, and from the equally profound difference between such a phonetic system as that of Ancient Greek, with its marvelously delicate balance between vowels and consonants, and that of a language of our Germanic type which rarely shrinks from the

horrors of harshly grouped consonants. Fortunately almost all Professor Körte's quotations are of verse composed in dactylic hexameter, the elegiac distich, or iambic trimeter. These forms may be made to go passably well in German, although for a non-German ear the hexameter in that language has little charm. (Of English hexameters the less said the better!) With Greek lyric measures it is quite another story; I doubt if real success in those can be hoped for in any language of our group. Again, owing to the different structure of the Greek and the English language (quite apart from the phonetics) the English line often needs "padding" to keep it approximately equal in length to that of the ancient language, which leads to various devices apt to become fatiguing to the reader. The "Alexandrine verse" of French tragedy has twelve syllables, like the purely iambic trimeter of Greek; but the rhythm of the two is entirely different. Professor Allinson has used a twelve-syllable verse in his translations from Menander, and has come somewhat nearer the Greek rhythm; yet his lines often sound rather exotic, and the need of the two additional syllables in each, beyond the ten usual in English iambic verse, makes for diffuseness of expression.

In most cases Professor Körte used for his illustrative extracts translations already existing; and Dr. Hammer and Mr. Hadas have wisely followed the same plan in their English version. There was no great abundance of English versions to choose from, except in the case of Theocritus; and

some of the English translations of him are simply grotesque. It is not too much to say that by far the most faithful preservation of Theocritean flavor and charm is to be found in Andrew Lang's prose rendition.

For many readers the chief interest of Körte's work is likely to lie in his discussion of Menander and Theocritus; but Callimachus also, as here presented to us, becomes a far more interesting personality than he had hitherto been for most of us.

Though one of the most lauded by ancient critics, Menander had been known to us very imperfectly, but discoveries of large portions of his play have now enabled us to judge more adequately. We are fortunate in having Professor Allinson's admirable edition of the principal fragments, published in "The Loeb Classical Library." The praise lavished upon Menander by ancient writers of the later age — "Menander and Life, which one of you copied the other?" wrote Aristophanes of Byzantium — has not been unanimously echoed by modern writers since the discovery of the new fragments. The reader of today, accustomed to the minute analysis presented in the "psychological" novel and play, will be more inclined to regard Menander's portraiture of character as limited in range and depth by comparison. Yet a fair judgment can hardly fail to give high praise to his skill in inventing variations of the very few themes which had already become the conventional ones for comedy, or to recognize his keen appreciation of the differ-

ences in human beings as individuals. The striking adroitness and grace of his diction and verse are of necessity largely lost in translation.

Of Theocritus, and of Apollonius Rhodius also, we gain, if not an altogether new conception, at least the possibility of a fuller appreciation and juster estimate, from the perusal of this work. Even less known poets receive their due; so that of this small book it may be truly said that its value is really great.

EDWARD DELAVAN PERRY

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TRANSLATORS' PREFACE

In the Preface to his book, *Hellenistische Dichtung*, Professor Körte says: "This little book is intended not for scholars but for the wider circle of readers who can appreciate poetry even when it is presented in a foreign garb. . . . Every educated person is bound by a thousand ties to classical Greek poetry; everyone is more or less familiar with its outstanding works, e.g., Homer and Greek tragedy. The greater part of classical Greek poetry is available in translations, often of high excellence. But the layman's knowledge of Hellenistic poetry is practically nil; even classical scholars have too long treated that branch of poetry as a stepchild. It was due only to the papyrus discoveries of the last generation, which measurably increased our store of Hellenistic poetry, that scholarship was aroused to a more active interest in this field."

This charge of neglect can be leveled with equal justice against English-speaking scholars and readers. In the Preface to his *Hellenistic Civilization* [1] the great English Hellenistic scholar, Professor W. W. Tarn, writes: "The neglect in Britain of this period, in spite of its varied interest, has been

[1] E. Arnold and Co. (London, 1927).

notorious, and there is no work in English to which anyone who desires a connected view of the Greek world during these centuries can turn." Again, in his Bibliography (p. 302), we find the following statement: "There is no history in English of later Greek literature." Similarly, Dr. M. M. Gillies, in the Preface to his excellent edition of the third book of Apollonius' *Argonautica*,[2] explains the necessity for his extensive Introduction by saying: ". . . the justification of its length is the absence of a suitable text-book in English of the literature of this [Hellenistic] period. . . ."

The need voiced by these scholars prompted us to make available the little account of Hellenistic poetry which we present herewith. Its author, Professor Körte, needs no introduction to the community of scholars. He is accepted as the outstanding authority in the field of Hellenistic poetry. He has read the entire translation in manuscript and has made numerous suggestions which we have incorporated into our text.

Professor Körte's generosity in quoting from the literature he discusses is a praiseworthy feature in such a book as this. Not the least part of our task has been the selection of suitable English versions of the various passages cited. Our aim has been to select the best verse translations available. In a few instances we were forced to use translations that were perhaps inferior because the point Professor Körte selected for comment did not stand out clearly in the more

[2] Cambridge: At the University Press (1928).

readable version. In the case of some poems of Callimachus we were compelled to give a prose version, since a poetic rendering was not available. The List of Books for English readers mentions the various translations.

We should not have been able to present these various translations were it not for the courteous and generous coöperation of the various publishers. To the editors of "The Loeb Classical Library" are due thanks for the translations of Menander and of Callimachus; to Messrs. Macmillan and Co., for Mr. Poste's version of Aratus, Dr. Way's Theocritus and Moschus, and Mr. Macnaghten's version of Catullus' *Lock of Berenice;* to Messrs. Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner and Co., for Mr. Pott's versions of some of the Greek love songs from the *Anthology;* to Messrs. J. M. Dent and Sons for Dr. Way's translation of Apollonius' *Argonautica;* to Messrs. G. Routledge and Sons for Mr. Wright's versions from the *Greek Anthology* and Mr. Hallard's rendering of Theocritus; to Mr. Philip Nutt for Mr. Sharpley's Herodas; to The Richards Press, Ltd., for Mr. Leaf's versions from the *Greek Anthology;* and to the Yale University Press for Mr. Lawton's version of a poem in the *Greek Anthology.*

We have also to thank Professor Edward D. Perry and Professor La Rue Van Hook, of Columbia University, and Professor E. Adelaide Hahn, of Hunter College, and the Rev. Mr. A. Griscom for the translations which they were kind enough to make for us. In particular are our thanks due to the three scholars to whom we offer the dedication of this

little work as a token of our regard. Professors Keyes and Riess examined the manuscript, Professors Keyes and Knapp read the proofs. All offered many helpful suggestions.

Finally we offer our grateful acknowledgments to the editorial staff of the Columbia University Press, in particular to Dr. Clarke F. Ansley and Mr. Charles G. Proffitt.

As for the rest, *Habent sua fata libelli.*

J.H.
M.H.

CONTENTS

Preface vii

Translators' Preface xv

Introduction: Hellenism 3

Part I: The New Comedy 13

Part II: Alexandria 83

1. Elegy 94

2. The Epic 150

a) *The Heroic Epic* 150

b) *Didactic Poetry* 245

3. Drama 257

4. The Mime 276

5. The Epigram 350

List of Books 407

Index 441

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

HELLENISM

The term Hellenism is hardly a hundred years old. It was coined by the great historian Johann Gustav Droysen, who was the first to perceive clearly the vast importance, for the general history of European civilization, of the period from the conquest of Alexander the Great down to Augustus. He it was who boldly ventured to write a history [1] of this entire period, which hitherto "lay as a neglected field between the studies of classical philologists and those of theologians, a field gladly shunned by both alike."

Alexander's fabulous and triumphant progress to distant India had wrought a radical change throughout the Greek world. The Hellenic city-states, whose never ceasing feuds during the last hundred years of their existence had constituted the principal subject matter of Greek history, were either destroyed, like Thebes, or reduced to the rôle of small, politically unimportant states, like Athens and Sparta.

To be sure, the world monarchy of Alexander did not survive its highly gifted founder; but out of the prolonged and bitter conflict which ensued after his death there emerged

[1] *Geschichte des Hellenismus.* Vol. I, 1836; Vol. II, 1843.

new, great powers of an extent and might hitherto unknown to the Greek world: the empire of the Ptolemies in Egypt, that of the Seleucids in Asia, and that of the Antigonids in Macedonia. The political units of Greece proper and the Greek archipelago — namely, the Achaean and Aetolian Leagues and the city-states of Athens, Sparta and Rhodes — were for the most part within the sphere of influence, at one time of the Ptolemies, at another of the Macedonians, as more or less dependent confederates.

The common link that united all these powers great and small was the Hellenic culture. Alexander's march to the East was as much a triumphal progress of Hellenic culture as of Macedonian arms. For centuries Greek culture had been gaining sway over mankind, a sway such as none of the older cultures, neither that of the empire of the Pharaohs nor that of Mesopotamia, had ever possessed. Though many foreign elements from the cultural heritage of the East had penetrated Greek culture to an increasing degree, yet whoever would influence the world at large, be he Syrian, Egyptian or Cappadocian, had to employ the Greek tongue and adapt himself to Greek forms of thought and expression. Even the nation which most tenaciously preserved its peculiar characteristics through thousands of years, the Jewish, was itself in the first third of the second century all but submerged under Hellenism; the municipal constitution at Jerusalem was at times Greek, the high priest Jesus hellenized his name to Jason, and even the account of the

national reaction under the Maccabees was, from the beginning, drawn up in part in Greek.[2]

This ascendancy of Greek culture received its first check, if not its deathblow, at the hands of the rising Roman world power. The Romans, too, had voluntarily yielded to the world-wide influence of Greek culture, but they had preserved their language, for which they had won dominion throughout Italy, and had now made the united Italian nation mistress of the Hellenized East. They, too, considered themselves disciples of the Greeks, but they ventured to try to surpass their teachers in their own field. From the Hellenistic poets, who were in the first instance their much admired and zealously imitated models, the Romans went back to the Greek classics and thence drew a vigor lacking in contemporary Greek poets. At the moment when Cleopatra, the last queen of Macedonian descent, was dethroned, and Egypt, long since dependent, was incorporated into the Roman Empire, the poets of Augustan Rome began to create works with which nothing in Hellenism, now grown old and enervated, can be compared; the Greek Muse is almost entirely hushed while her younger Roman sister produces her noblest strains. The period of about three hundred years from 323 to 30 B.C. we term the Hellenistic Age.

To be sure, poetry was not the medium which Hellenistic culture employed to give clearest and fullest expression to

[2] The second book of the Maccabees is not, like the first, translated from the Aramaic or Hebrew, but a Greek original.

her legacy to mankind. As late as the fifth century, Attic Tragedy and its sister art, Comedy, still had the power to comprise the whole store of thought and sentiment, question and doubt, which agitated Periclean Athens; but at the close of that century, poetry forfeited its rôle as the medium of expression for the whole intellectual life. The year 406, in which Euripides and Sophocles died in quick succession, marks a significant turning point in the history of Greek poetry. Of this the comedian Aristophanes was aware, for in his *Frogs*, composed in the following winter, he dispatches Dionysus, the patron of the theater, to Hades, to fetch back a genuine poet, for "the good are all dead and gone — only the worthless are left behind." The function of a poet — that of being both leader and teacher of the people — which in *The Frogs* the two competing tragedians still assume as a matter of course, passed in the fourth century into other hands — those of philosophy and rhetoric, which, rightly or wrongly, were considered more competent to exercise this function. In the Greek intellectual life of the fourth century no poet can be even remotely compared in importance with Plato and with Demosthenes, to mention only the two greatest. Poetry was dethroned and was unable, even in the Hellenistic Age, to regain its former position in the intellectual life of the people. The imperishable achievement of Hellenism for European civilization lay in the domain of philosophy and still more in the domain of the exact sciences — mathe-

matics, physics, astronomy, geography and medicine; in addition, Hellenism called into existence a science which, though it is useful to poetry, does not foster it, namely, philology. Poetry in the Hellenistic Age ceased to be the bread of intellectual life and became but a savory titbit, which enriched the table of life but was not indispensable to it. One must grasp the complete change in the position of Hellenistic poetry in the intellectual life of the age in order to understand its peculiar character and to do justice to its accomplishments. Two outstanding facts separate Hellenistic poetry from the classical: it lost its spiritual relation to religion, and it ceased to owe its existence to a specific section of the Greek nation. Thus Hellenistic poetry was deprived of the two basic roots from which classical poetry drew perhaps the greatest part of its energy and vigor.

This manifests itself unmistakably in the oldest branch of Hellenistic poetry, namely, New Comedy, which exhibits a more intimate kinship to classical poetry than the other kinds of Hellenistic poetry show. For the performance of his plays, Menander, too, no doubt, is restricted to definite Attic festivals in honor of Dionysus, at which dramatic performances constituted a part of the ceremonial, but his attitude towards the festival and the people is unlike that of Aristophanes. Of the Dionysiac exuberance, which, properly speaking, was represented solely by the comic chorus, there is no trace to be found in his plays; he eliminates the chorus in fact, though he preserves it in appearance, useless

ballast, as it were, to satisfy the ceremonial requirements. Whereas the comedies of Aristophanes were so closely associated with the immediate life and activities of the Attic people that they were scarcely intelligible outside of Athens and could exercise their full effect only at one specific festival, Menander's Comedy of Manners was almost beyond the limits of time and place. The latter appealed to all who had been initiated into Greek culture, and was as intelligible and impressive after fifty or a hundred years as in the year of its origin. One no longer had to be an Athenian to compose Attic comedies, and, as a matter of fact, almost all the leaders of the New Comedy, except Menander, were natives, not of Athens, but of Cilicia, Pontus, Macedonia, Sicily and Euboea; it mattered little after all whether a comedy was first performed at Athens or at Alexandria. This internal and external dissociation from the native soil of the Athenian Dionysus festival enabled the New Comedy of Menander to widen the scope of its influence to an extent which was denied the comedy of Aristophanes; Menander's comedy pleased on the banks of the Nile, Orontes and Tigris as well as on the banks of the Ilissus, but the number of persons to whom it appealed was limited everywhere. Only persons intimately conversant with Greek education could enjoy it; to the masses at large its subtlest charm was probably a closed book.

The detachment noticed in the case of the New Comedy is even more marked in almost all other branches of Hellen-

istic poetry; the number of upper-class persons receptive to the influence of poetry steadily diminished. In those days this disastrous division of the people into educated and uneducated took place for the first time — a cleavage which thus far poetry has only seldom bridged, and from which our present civilization still suffers. Sophocles and Aristophanes spoke to the entire body of their fellow-citizens, who, irrespective of social standing and wealth, foregathered at the festivals of Dionysus; but Alexandria's poets were aware that the bulk of the people did not understand them; moreover, they themselves did not care to be understood by them. The poets wrote only for an intellectual élite, whose centers were the court and the great educational institution, the library; such gatherings of the élite are to be found at all princely courts and in all cities where culture flourishes. The heavy demands the poets made upon the knowledge, nay, often upon the erudition of their audience and readers, plainly enhances with the initiated the charm of their works. Compared with the lusty virgin growth of classical poetry, the Hellenistic is for the most part a domesticated or even a hothouse plant; but its flowers, cultivated with conscious art, have, for all that, a beauty of color and a delicacy of fragrance which still possess the power to delight and charm.

Part I

THE NEW COMEDY

PART I

THE NEW COMEDY

The New Comedy occupies a unique position in Hellenistic poetry, inasmuch as it took its rise at Athens and this city continued at all times to be its center, whereas Hellenistic poetry in general consciously achieved an independence from Attic poetry, which for nearly two centuries had dominated the intellectual life of Greece. The New Comedy is the product of long development, which must here be briefly surveyed, since it has been left out of consideration in Heinemann's account of the classical poetry of the Greeks.[1]

The Old Comedy of Cratinus, Eupolis and Aristophanes was one of the most attractive and most inconsistent creations of world literature. The most intense lyric rapture and the coarsest lewdness, the purest patriotic sentiment and the deadliest defamation of political opponents, the most exuberant flight of poetic fancy and farcical triviality, profound thought and frivolous nonsense, are indissolubly blended in Old Comedy. This magic flower withered away along with the old Attic democracy, which had fostered its

[1] Kröner's Taschenausgabe, Vol. XIV.

growth. Although the democracy had been reëstablished (403 B.C.) after the collapse of the Athenian Empire (404 B.C.) and the embittered strife that ensued, yet this restored democracy could no longer bring about a revival of the abundant exuberance, the political passions and the wanton spirits that inspired the Old Comedy. Comedy becomes tame and dull, as may be easily observed in the *Plutus*, the last comedy of Aristophanes, which the aging poet brought out in 388. The term "Middle Comedy" was used even in antiquity to designate the period between Aristophanes and Menander (386–321); Middle Comedy was a depression between the two high points of Attic Comedy, represented by the political comedy of Aristophanes on the one hand and by Menander's Comedy of Manners on the other. The literary output of this period is very profuse; about fifty poets are known to us by name, and of these some were astonishingly fertile. But the tide of their comedies soon ebbed completely away, because the period developed no comic poet of more than mediocre ability. Our knowledge of this period is inadequate; not a single entire play has survived — only numerous fragments, seldom extensive. Nevertheless the chief lines of development are discernible. To be particularly noted is the steadily diminishing importance of the chorus. For the structure of the play it was almost of no consequence; if at times it still had a share in the action, its principal task was to fill the interludes with popular songs, which were omitted in the published

editions. Along with the chorus, personal invective recedes into the background. To be sure, Menander's youthful productions contain shafts of satire directed against unpopular individuals in the city, and an impressive number of comedies of the fourth century are named after certain contemporaries; but they bear, not the names of leading statesmen and generals, but of women of the *demi-monde* and *bons vivants*, cooks and flatterers. The spirit of the age had become thoroughly materialistic; the public would hear nothing of political contests, but listened eagerly to every scandal of the world of fashion. We gain a surprisingly intimate acquaintance with the celebrated courtesans of the fourth century; often we are even able to trace the career of such a woman almost down to the year when she began to play a part in smart society, when she reached the summit of her popularity, and when her star began to wane. Because the New Comedy assumes a new attitude towards the hetaerae, living representatives of that profession playing a considerable part in it, it may be worth while to quote a rather extensive fragment of Anaxilas' *Neottis*, produced about 344, as a specimen of the Middle Comedy. In this fragment a number of women of the *demi-monde* are quite skillfully, though somewhat affectedly, compared to mythical monsters:

> The man whoe'er has loved a courtesan,
> Will say that no more lawless worthless race
> Can anywhere be found: for what ferocious

Unsociable she-dragon, what Chimæra,
Though it breathe fire from its mouth, what Charybdis,
What three-headed Scylla, dog o' the sea,
Or hydra, sphinx, or raging lioness,
Or viper, or winged harpy (greedy race),
Could go beyond those most accursed harlots?
There is no monster greater. They alone
Surpass all other evils put together.
And let us now consider them in order: —
First there is Plangon; she, like a chimæra,
Scorches the wretched barbarians with fire;
One knight alone was found to rid the world of her,
Who, like a brave man, stole her furniture
And fled, and she despairing, disappear'd.
Then for Sinope's friends, may I not say
That 'tis a hydra they cohabit with?
For she is old: but near her age, and like her,
Greedy Gnathæna flaunts, a twofold evil.
And as for Nannion, in what, I pray,
Does she from Scylla differ? Has she not
Already swallow'd up two lovers, and
Open'd her greedy jaws t' enfold a third?
But he with prosp'rous oar escaped the gulf.
Then does not Phryne beat Charybdis hollow?
Who swallows the sea-captains, ships and all.
Is not Theano a mere Siren pluck'd?
Their face and voice are woman's, but their legs
Are feather'd like a blackbird's. Take the lot,
'Tis not too much to call them Theban Sphinxes.
For they speak nothing plain, but only riddles;
And in enigmas tell their victims how

They love and dote, and long to be caress'd.
" Would that I had a quadruped," says one,
That may serve for a bed or easy chair.
" Would that I had a tripod " — " Or a biped,"
That is, a handmaid. And the hapless fool
Who understands these hints, like Œdipus,
If saved at all is saved against his will.
But they who do believe they're really loved
Are much elated, and raise their heads to heaven.
And in a word, of all the beasts on earth
The direst and most treacherous is a harlot.

— C. D. Yonge

As a compensation for the loss of political satire Middle Comedy offers two themes of diverse character — the travesty of myths and the realistic representation of daily life. These themes are apparent in the beginnings of comedy, but had been almost entirely suppressed in the time of Aristophanes. In Middle Comedy, travesty of the epic tales of gods and heroes assumes new forms; the old, inoffensive chaffing of the gods holds its own, but there are numerous plays which treat the myth in relation to a specific tragedy. No longer is the saga travestied as such, but rather the form given to it by the tragedians. Euripides particularly, whose plays were at that time very popular and frequently produced, is a butt; time and again the names of his most popular tragedies — *Auge, The Bacchanals, Medea, Orestes* — reappear in the comedies. Thus comedy becomes the aesthetic critic of individual tragedies — a tendency already

apparent in Aristophanes. The keen interest in tragedy now strongly influences the language of comedy, which becomes more reserved and refined, but feebler, too; but the interest affects to a greater extent the structure of the plays. This applies not only to the travesties of tragedy, but also, in the same degree, to the plays which derive their themes from daily life.

Gradually the number of titles which are derived from ordinary life increases. In Antiphanes, the most fertile poet of this period, such themes preponderate. Here are comedies named after certain particular callings — *The Flute-Player, The Painter, The Physician, The Soldier;* or named after foreign cities and countries — *The Arcadian, The Boeotian Woman, The Ephesian Woman, The Scythian;* we find, further, designations of relationship — *The Sisters, The Twins, The Heiress;* and character types — *The Constant, The Gay Ladies* and *The Selfish Person.* In all these plays, where the plot is freely invented, the poet is at once the imitator and the rival of the tragic poet. To what extent Antiphanes considered himself a rival of the tragedians may be illustrated from his comedy *Poetry:*

> In every way, my friends, is Tragedy
> A happy poem. For the argument
> Is, in the first place, known to the spectators,
> Before one single actor says a word.
> So that the poet need do little more
> Than just remind his hearers what they know.

For should I speak of Œdipus, at once
They recollect his story — how his father
Was Laius, and Jocasta too his mother;
What were his sons', and what his daughters' names,
And what he did and suffer'd. So again
If a man names Alcmæon, the very children
Can tell you how he in madness slew
His mother; and Adrastus furious,
Will come in haste, and then depart again;
And then at last, when they can say no more,
And when the subject is almost exhausted,
They lift an engine easily as a finger,
And that is quite enough to please the theatre.
But our case is harder. We are forced
T' invent the whole of what we write; new names,
Things done before, done now, new plots, new openings,
And new catastrophes. And if we fail in aught,
Some Chremes or some Phido hisses us.
While Peleus is constrain'd by no such laws,
Nor Teucer.

— C. D. YONGE

From tragedy, comedy acquired its continuous action, its artful progress by means of striking changes of fortune; it was also from tragedy that it derived the love-motif. To the Old Comedy this motif was as strange as to the older tragedy; without it a modern comedy cannot be thought of up to the time of G. Hauptmann's *Biberpelz*. It was Euripides who had first utilized the relations between the sexes as material for drama. He portrays the sinful love of a

married woman for a man not her husband in his *Hippolytus* and *Stheneboea;* the jealousy of a betrayed wife serves as a framework for the *Medea;* in the *Ion* he shows the hatred of a childless wife towards the illegitimate offspring of her husband; in his *Helena* he represents the happy reunion of a loving and long separated husband and wife. Especially in his later plays he draws the world of heroes and the middle-class society of Athens so closely together in language and sentiment that the transposition of the conflicts with which he deals into middle-class society was rendered easy for the comedian. One need only divest Euripides' *Helena* of its epic names in order to get a domestic drama. Although, in view of the scarcity of extant plays, it is difficult to give detailed proof of the prominence of the love-motif in the Middle Comedy, yet, for all that, we may assign it a prominent place. How could the many plays bearing names of women — *The Delian Woman, The Ephesian Woman, The Corinthian Woman* — have been composed without the element of love-intrigue? The *Persa* of Plautus, which constitutes for us the only comedy based on an original of this period, treats love-intrigue to such a degree as a matter of course that its author, by no means a very original poet, must have had many predecessors in this field. Amorous adventure achieved uncontested dominion over the New Comedy, and until modern times comedy has succeeded in freeing itself from this motif only in exceptional cases.

Along with the love-motif, New Comedy adopted many other features from Euripidean tragedy. Especially common are scenes of recognition, which played so great a part in later tragedy; parents find their children whom they long believed dead (as in Euripides' *Ion* and *Hypsipyle*); similarly brothers find their sisters (as in Euripides' *Iphigenia among the Taurians*). The recognition scenes, then, become an institution in the dramatic technique of the comedy. In order to bring about recognition, children, of course, must have been separated in early childhood from their parents, and brothers from sisters. This very frequently happened in the heroic saga through the exposure of newborn children. Immense is the host of heroines whom a god graces with his love, and who by means of " exposure " conceal the fruit of this relationship from their parents. This divine offspring is thereupon saved in a miraculous way and sooner or later acknowledged by its mother's family. Comedy transfers this episode to the middle class: daughters of respectable Attic citizens become the mistresses of their neighbors' sons or are ravished by unknown, drunken youths during festivals, as was Euripides' *Auge* by the intoxicated Heracles. They then give birth to a child, sometimes to twins, and with the aid of an old, trusted maid-servant, also a descendant of an Euripidean prototype, they expose this illegitimate offspring in some out-of-the-way spot. As a matter of course, the children are rescued and recognized sooner or later by means of rings or other trinkets exposed with them. We

find this motif of exposure and recognition perfected in the New Comedy, but, beyond doubt, here also Middle Comedy played the part of an intermediary between tragedy and New Comedy.

For the criticism of the New Comedy it is important that we realize that its assumptions, which gradually became traditional, were originally derived from the domain of myth and not from that of Attic domestic life. Doubtless there were at Athens in the fourth and third centuries cases of seduction of respectable maidens, and cases of the exposure of children, but surely such cases were not as numerous as the New Comedy might lead one to suppose. Rape, exposure and recognition were taken over from tragedy and became by degrees such favorite resources of dramatic technique that the Attic comedian could as little forego their use as could a Parisian writer of farces do without adultery.

Let us summarize what information may be collected as to the essential characteristics of the Middle Comedy.

It had lost almost everything that constituted the vigor of Old Comedy, and had not yet produced an adequate substitute. But it surpassed the mature dramatic technique of Euripidean tragedy in its presentation of ordinary life and thus paved the way for Menander's Comedy of Manners, to which we shall now direct our attention.

With the exception of the Homeric epic, no other kind of Hellenic poetry influenced world-literature so strongly and so permanently as the comedy of Menander, and yet until about

the beginning of the present century we possessed no coherent fragment of any considerable length in the original. We knew it, as we knew the art of Praxiteles before the discovery of his Hermes at Olympia, from Roman copies; and the Roman dramatic copyists, as was to be expected, deviated from their Greek models much more markedly than did the plastic artists.

When Plautus and Terence were adapting the plays of Menander, Philemon and Diphilus — to mention only the outstanding poets of the New Comedy — for the Roman stage, the Latin language still lacked the suppleness to reproduce the consummate refinement of style which in the case of Menander constitutes his principal charm. Terence attempts it, but the purity of his idiom appears dull and dry as compared with the Attic liveliness, as does the painstaking polish of Roman replicas compared with the lifelike realism of Attic marbles. Terence's weakness has been pointed out by no meaner critic than Caesar in several hexameters, which, indeed, do not exhibit the polish of the Augustan poets:

> You too, O half Menander, 'mid the best
> Are placed, and rightly, lover of pure speech.
> Would that your easy style true force possessed,
> That as a comic poet you might reach
> The Greeks, and not fall short. Terence, I grieve
> That this one thing you never could achieve.
>
> — E. Adelaide Hahn

In his genius for linguistic innovations Plautus, to be sure, far excels Menander himself. But he transmutes the refined style of the Attic poet into a coarse and colloquial idiom which has a peculiar charm of its own. An analogy is offered by the German carvers of Dürer's period in their rendering of Italian originals.

Quite apart from matters of language, much of the effect of the original plays is lost in the Roman adaptations. Even Terence does not dare to set before the Romans Menander's finest ideas and deepest problems; yet occasionally he does not hesitate to insert in his adaptations scenes from other plays, even from other playwrights. Plautus, on the other hand, dealt more violently with his models: his rude instinct for theatrical effects makes him indifferent to the structure of the Attic plays; he omits entire scenes, inserts others, and, in conformity with the practice of the Hellenistic cabaret stage, allows ample space to the sung portions, whereas the Attic poets confined themselves almost exclusively to the spoken verses, namely, the iambic trimeters, and, on occasion, the trochaic tetrameter.

In the form given it by Plautus and Terence the New Attic Comedy has captivated the whole world. Without Plautus and Terence the Spanish comedy of Calderon and Lope de Vega would be out of the question; Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors* is a free adaptation of Plautus' *Menaechmi* (The Indistinguishable Brothers), and, above all, Molière bases his maturer art entirely on a Roman founda-

tion: *L'Avare*, perhaps his most popular play, shows the unmistakable influence of Plautus' *Aulularia*.

In Lessing's youthful plays his dependence on the Romans is also clearly discernible, and even in his *Minna von Barnhelm* some of the *dramatis personae* — the innkeeper, Francisca and Just — are traceable to ancient types.

That the originals of a form of art which has so permanently influenced the world could be entirely lost is most remarkable. Why was not Menander, at least, the recognized master of the New Comedy, preserved in the libraries of the Middle Ages and down to modern times, as was Aristophanes, who is much more difficult of comprehension? Aristophanes of Byzantium, the greatest Greek philologist, placed Menander, among all Greek poets, next only to Homer (an overestimation hard to understand); Ovid predicted his immortality; Plutarch placed him far above Aristophanes; he was eagerly read up to the fifth and sixth centuries of our era, but for all that he did not reach the sheltering harbor of the Byzantine monastic libraries. How could this have happened? The problem has not yet found satisfactory solution, but probably it was the narrow-mindedness of pedantic schoolmasters that is to be blamed for his loss. In the schools of later centuries the Attic classics were read chiefly as models of pure Attic speech as opposed to the cosmopolitan language which was developed in Hellenistic times and which contained a large proportion of non-Attic words and forms, especially those of Ionic

derivation. Now, the strict Atticists of the second century A.D. discovered in the style of Menander, who wrote the living tongue of his age, numerous expressions which diverged from old Attic usage; and for this reason the Atticists, Phrynichus in particular, waged a furious war against him with a seriousness that strikes us as amusing.

Phrynichus' condemnation gradually prejudiced the schools. No longer did they dare to put into the hands of youth as a model of style a poet who " defiled the language of the fathers with offal "; after the fourth century the long neglected Aristophanes gradually supplanted him for school use. A poet who was barred from the schools was bound to disappear gradually from the libraries in that age of cultural decadence; he was no longer copied, and he perished. He would have been lost to us forever, had not Egyptian ruins and graves partially restored him to us during the present generation. In the year 1898 the first sheet of a papyrus manuscript of Menander was published; since then the number of Menander papyri has increased to sixteen, and among them there is at least one of considerable length. In the year 1905, the French scholar, Gustave Lefebvre, found in Kôm-Ishkaou, the ancient Aphroditopolis, between the well-preserved walls of a late Roman house, a large pot full of documents from the time of Justinian and Justin the Second. For the protection of his documents the careful notary had put on the top of the pot many sheets of damaged books — among others, of an edition of Menan-

der. Although time and worms had wrought havoc with these sheets, they still contain more than fifteen hundred lines from five comedies. This main discovery is fortunately supplemented by a whole series of smaller finds, for, since in Roman times only a selection from the abundance of Menandrian plays was read, the same comedies occur again and again in papyri. Thus we possess at present remains of the best-known plays of Menander: *The Arbitrants,* in three manuscripts; *The Girl with Shorn Locks,* in four; *The Hated Man,* in three; and *The Farmer* and *The Flatterer,* in two each. To be sure we do not yet possess a single complete play, and even the restoration of *The Arbitrants,* of which we have two-thirds, is uncertain in details; but of some comedies we have such extensive fragments that we are able to obtain a clear conception of Menander's technique and style.[2] The discoveries of papyri up to the present have only heightened our impression of Menander's greatness; we have a series of non-Menandrian comedy papyri, but of these none can on sufficient grounds be assigned to any of his rivals, Philemon, for example, or Diphilus. For Rome of the Empire, Menander was the classic of the New Comedy, and rightly; for beyond doubt he was its leading spirit, in that he made something entirely new out of Middle Comedy, namely, the Comedy of Manners. His new style, whose

[2] F. v. Oppeln-Bronikowski and I have attempted to restore *The Arbitrants* in a German adaptation (Insel-Bücherei No. 104). In this form the play was very successfully performed thirteen times in Leipzig, fifteen in Magdeburg, five in Cologne.

clarity he perfected through gradual development, was taken over by his older rivals as far as they were able, and the succeeding generations continued to use it, but with quickly declining power.

The principal points of difference between the New and the Middle Comedy may be summarized as follows: The Dionysiac and supernatural elements are more and more consciously set aside; the parody of both myths and tragedy dies away and the representation of daily life becomes the almost exclusive function of comedy. The specific Dionysiac element, the chorus, which in the Middle Comedy had a connection, though slight, with the action, now becomes entirely detached and is transformed into what it may possibly have been in the early beginnings of comedy, namely, a troop (*komos*) of tipsy reveling youths. The only list of the *dramatis personae* of a Menandrian comedy which we possess does not include the chorus among the players; its first appearance is usually announced by a stereotyped expression, for instance, in *The Girl with Shorn Locks:*

A lot of drunken youths are coming up.

Otherwise the performers do not pay any attention to the chorus, its main function being to fill the entr'actes with popular songs which the poet omitted in the published edition. With the disappearance of the chorus there disappears also the element of personal satire; it is only in his earliest plays that Menander hurls a few harmless

missiles at well-known representatives of the fashionable world of Athens. Types, rather than individual contemporaries, are represented. In the case of courtesans the use of the type is especially striking; the poets of the Middle Comedy were entirely absorbed in the treatment of celebrated women of the contemporary *demi-monde*. They minutely portray their physical excellences and imperfections as well as their successes and failures. Now this tendency stops. In the comedies of Menander courtesans also play an important part, but his Thais does not show the life-like character displayed by her namesake who accompanied Alexander to Persia and, it is alleged, caused the conflagration of Persepolis, and who later bore several children to Ptolemy of Egypt and even became the mother-in-law of a prince. Menander's Thais is merely a type of a beautiful, clever and conscienceless courtesan. It was just this substitution of the type for the individual that ensured for the New Comedy Panhellenic influence: to understand a comedy one did not need to be acquainted with the personalities of fashionable Athens. The names become as typical as the characters; we find a relatively small group of Attic names, usually so common that no living bearer of any particular name could feel offended. Each name acquires a definite association: young men are called Moschion, Gorgias, Chaereas; older men, Laches, Demeas, Smicrines; Pamphile, Plangon, Glycera designate young girls or young women; Myrrhina, a mother; Sosias, in itself a good Attic name,

is in comedy borne exclusively by slaves. There are plays of Menander which have three or four names in common, but the similarity in names does not at all connote a similarity in content. The most significant differentiation between the New and the Middle Comedy lies in the careful portrayal of character; and this may best be understood by a thorough consideration of Menander's plays.

First of all let us review briefly the poet's life and education. He was born in the year 342–1, a son of Diopeithes, a distinguished Attic citizen. The birth year is important. The poet was too young to grasp the meaning of the hopeless struggle of Athens to maintain her position as a first-rate Greek power against the encroachments of Philip of Macedon; when the latter crushed Greek independence at Chaeronea, Menander was scarcely four years old. By the time he was full-grown, Alexander had already established his world-power; it is not probable that the nineteen-year-old Menander served in the Lamian War, the last unhappy attempt, after Alexander's death, to throw off the yoke of Macedonia. Then Antipater shattered the dream of political supremacy for the Athenian state, and from 317 to 307 Demetrius of Phalerum, a friend and schoolmate of Menander, ruled Athens under Macedonian protection. Menander's relations to this ruler almost caused his ruin when in 307 Demetrius Poliorcetes captured the city and set up a phantom of the old democracy. The exaggerated servility with which the degenerate people extolled the liberator De-

metrius could only strengthen a keen-sighted observer in his disdain of democracy; thus his personal experience naturally brought it about that Menander's attitude toward the political life of his native city was throughout one of cool aloofness. Still, he loved his Athens, and, for all the tempting invitations of the Egyptian king, he remained in his native city until his death (292–1); it was not, however, Athens, the foremost political power of the Hellenes, which he honored, but rather Athens, the metropolis of Hellenic culture. More important than all his political experiences were the impressions which he received from Theophrastus, the successor of Aristotle. In the past, philosophy had been most vigorously attacked in comedy by the race-conscious Athenian Aristophanes; now the greatest comic poet after Aristophanes was indebted to philosophy for his skill in understanding and sketching humanity.

Menander began to compose early; during his military service as an ephebus he put on, in the year 321, his first piece, *Anger*. In the thirty years of his literary activity he composed no less than 105 comedies — according to some, 109. This amazing productivity, which no poet of the Old Comedy even approached, though in modern times it is far surpassed by the fifteen hundred or more plays of Lope de Vega, finds explanation partly in the fact that, so far as the invention of the action was concerned, he took less trouble than the poets of the Old Comedy. Certain presuppositions and complications which Middle Comedy had

already borrowed from Euripides — seduction or violation of maidens, exposure of infants, their recognition by their parents — recur with a wearying frequency. Paradoxical as it sounds, the poet is unconcerned about the action or at least its underlying situation.

One example will in itself suffice to show how little Menander hesitates to construct two plays on an almost identical plot-basis. In *The Hero* and in *The Farmer*, a young Attic maiden, Myrrhina, had in days past been wronged by a youth unknown to her; in both plays she had given birth to twins, a boy and a girl. When the son, whose name in each play is Gorgias, has grown up, he is in each play a servant in the household of his unknown father in the country; the girl in both plays is seduced by a young neighbor. In both plays the latter fact is revealed when the unsuspecting father arranges a match for her which is frustrated through the recognition. Finally, in the two plays a slave Davus enacts similar parts.

One would be inclined to believe that these two plays must resemble each other as closely as two peas in a pod, and yet they are entirely different. The Myrrhina of *The Hero*, with the assistance of an old maid-servant, entrusts her twins Gorgias and Plangon to a shepherd-slave to be reared. Later she (Myrrhina) marries the young man (Laches) who had wronged her, without either recognizing the other; she is now a respected lady in good circumstances. After the death of their foster father, her children come

into the house of the real father to work off a debt contracted by the former. Myrrhina knows of the presence of her own children in the house; she does not dare, however, to confess the fact to her husband, but suffers her children to be regarded as servants, Gorgias as shepherd, Plangon as housemaid. The two children are thus in every way deprived of their social standing; and when a young slave, Davus, falls in love with Plangon, Laches does not hesitate to promise him the girl, naturally in the loose form of a slave marriage. Just then it becomes known that Plangon has been seduced by a young neighbor; her confinement is at hand, and, in order to secure his possession of the girl, Davus assumes the guilt. This very circumstance arouses the motherly instinct in Myrrhina; she sees with painful clarity that any hope of her daughter's regaining her proper social position disappears if Plangon should become a slave's mate. Her excitement seems to have caused the disclosure of her own secret and, also, of the paternity of Laches; at any rate it is certain that the twins ultimately are recognized as the children of Laches and Myrrhina and that Pheidias, the neighbor's son, takes Plangon to wife.

The situation is quite different in *The Farmer*. Here Myrrhina does not entrust her children to another; she brings up the twins, whom their father does not know, with much trouble and care. Thanks to their mother's sacrifice the children grow up in poverty, but as Attic citizens. When a neighbor's son becomes her daughter's lover, he of course

feels an obligation to marry her, and intends to do so, but the irresolute young man has not the courage to oppose steadfastly his father's plans for another marriage. Myrrhina has sent her son Gorgias to the country to maintain himself as a free laborer. He enters the house of his unknown father, Cleaenetus, a well-to-do farmer, and wins his heart by the devoted care which he bestows upon him after an accident. To show his gratitude, old Cleaenetus wishes to marry the sister of his benefactor and to have the entire family live with him in the country. But this apparent windfall greatly embarrasses the distressed and timid Myrrhina, for the confinement of her daughter is impending and she is unable to conceal her condition any longer. The complicated situation is unraveled by the sound common sense of the farmer Cleaenetus, who says of himself:

> I am a country boor, even I will not deny it, and I am not perfectly acquainted with city ways, but time keeps improving my knowledge.[3]
>
> — F. G. Allinson

Myrrhina and her children are relieved of every distress, and the girl's lover takes her as his wife.

That two plays, so different, could grow out of the same situation is essentially attributable to the fact that Menander delineated the character of Myrrhina differently in the two plays. In *The Hero* Myrrhina coldly thrusts her children

[3] From The Loeb Classical Library, reprinted by permission.

away; she gains a good station in life and first bethinks herself of her maternal duties when it is almost too late. In *The Farmer* she is a heroic mother, who for many years suffers anxiety and privation, who is gradually dulled by the strain of daily misery which threatens to engulf her, until finally the devoted efforts of her son, whom she herself has brought up, bring about deliverance.

And thus we may say that the characters, and not the external events which are the framework of the action, determine the course of Menander's play; this is the keystone of his art and at the same time the most important improvement which he made over Old Comedy. Aristophanes attaches no importance to the consistent development of his characters; if the situation seems to require it, he twists them about like a glove. To quote an instance, the rascally sausage dealer in *The Knights,* on whose knavery and shamelessness the whole play depends, recovers his senses at the end of the play and suddenly becomes a circumspect and noble leader of the people. This would be impossible with Menander; he sets up as a guiding principle of his art the consistent representation of a character complete in itself. With all seriousness he accepts the idea which, in his *Arbitrants,* he puts into the mouth of the shrewd slave Onesimus:

" Well, do not then the gods look out for us? " you'll say.
To each of us they have allotted Character
As garrison-commander. Ever present, he

Brings one to ruin, whoso seems to use him ill;
Another man he saves. Our deity is this,
And he's responsible for each man's faring well
Or badly . . .[4]

— F. G. Allinson

For his profound interest in character and its influence upon human life Menander is indebted to Peripatetic philosophy. Aristotle in his *Ethics* had defined virtue as the happy mean between two unsound extremes (e.g., courage is the mean between cowardice and foolhardiness); he also cited many individual traits by which the unsound extremes may be recognized. His disciple Theophrastus, Menander's teacher, had in turn paid especial attention to the observation of characters which deviate from the golden mean; he gave in his charming booklet *Characters* thirty exquisitely drawn descriptions of faulty characters, e.g., The Flatterer, The Boaster, The Superstitious Man. This Theophrastean method of character sketching, which constructs, mosaic-like, a vivid and colorful picture made up of many individual traits, Menander appropriated to himself and transferred to the stage. He characterizes continuously but never obtrusively.

As an example may be quoted the self-portrayal of a distrustful miser, in a papyrus which, unfortunately, up to the present, cannot be assigned with certainty to any known play. A treasure has been brought into the house of greedy

[4] From The Loeb Classical Library, reprinted by permission.

old Smicrines for a reason unknown to us; and the miser now appears and soliloquizes as follows:

> That no one may declare I'm miserly,
> I did not seek to learn how much of gold,
> How many silver things he brings to me.
> Naught did I count; for just as it was there,
> I had it carried thus to my own home;
> For falsely am I called a wicked man.
> How much exactly was the treasure there
> Can be found out; for they who brought it here
> Were slaves. Methinks that they quite willingly
> Will wish to hold to justice and the laws;
> Yet if they don't one will not suffer it.
>
> — La Rue Van Hook

In his very attempt to clear himself of the charge of avarice, Smicrines shows to what degree he is controlled by this passion. He consoles himself with the thought that the slaves may be forced to render an accurate account by means of torture — but he only hints at this; he avoids an open statement. Still more strongly does the miser's natural suspicion express itself at his second appearance, in the next act:

> To me came quickly Davus with the list
> Of things; well has he taken thought for me!
> Davus is in collusion with this crew. —
> And yet, by Zeus, he has done well. And I
> Excuse have gladly found so as no more
> With kindness to investigate the affair,

But to my own advantage. It is clear
That twice the amount is not accounted for.
I know full well the tricks of this base slave.

—La Rue Van Hook

The rendering of the account missing in the first scene thus serves, not to ease the miser's mind, but on the contrary to increase his suspicion; now let the slave be properly tortured!

This elaboration and refinement of character delineation change the poet's attitude towards his characters. In the political Old Comedy the poet himself almost always espoused the cause of a particular party; his characters therefore were either entirely white or entirely black; there are no half tones. Menander on the contrary stands above parties and does justice to all: he uniformly endows his characters with both virtues and faults, as is the case in real life.

Of this, too, we have a good example in *The Girl with Shorn Locks,* the story of which is as follows: A well-to-do Corinthian, Pataecus, had years ago lost his whole fortune at the moment when his wife died after giving birth to twins. Since the children seemed a burden to the impoverished man, he caused their exposure, attaching to them his wife's trinkets. A poor woman found the twins. She brought up the girl, Glycera, as her own child, and gave the boy Moschion to her neighbor, a wealthy matron, who desired a son. When Glycera grew up she became the mistress of an officer, Polemon, whose house was near that of Moschion's foster

mother. On her deathbed the old woman confided her secret to Glycera, but the latter did not approach Moschion, for fear of jeopardizing his happy station in life. Now Moschion, a light-minded youth, falls in love with his pretty neighbor, and when one evening he embraces and kisses her before the house door she does not repulse him, knowing that he is her brother. At this juncture Polemon surprises the pair and, in a fit of rage over his mistress' apparent infidelity, he cuts off her hair. The girl, deeply hurt, flees to her neighbor's house and strengthens the conviction of Moschion that she will prove an easy conquest for him. Polemon's rage quickly gives way to sincere repentance for his violence and to deep grief over the loss of his beloved, whom he considers his wife, although there had been no legal marriage. After fruitless attempts to win her back by threats, he resorts to amicable negotiations, with the help of their mutual neighbor Pataecus. These negotiations lead to Pataecus' recognition of Glycera and Moschion as his children by means of the trinkets once exposed with them; since he has long ago recovered his fortune, he receives them with joy. As the daughter of the wealthy Pataecus, Glycera seems forever lost to Polemon, and his agony over her loss almost drives him to suicide. But Glycera has in the meantime realized the worth of her impetuous but faithful soldier lover and, with the permission of her father, Pataecus, she goes to him of her own accord, with a substantial dowry, as his lawful wife.

As long as our sole source of knowledge for the general outline of this story was the meager information supplied by ancient authors, no one doubted that the rough and jealous soldier would be duped and that Glycera would fall to the lot of another suitor. But now the papyri have taught us better. Menander endowed the blustering, awkward soldier, who had been a familiar figure in comedy since the beginning of the fifth century, with entirely new features. He draws the ardent, thoughtless warrior as an honest, lifelike youth, whose impetuous but deep passion is much superior to the frivolous desire for pleasure of the pampered Don Juan, Moschion. This combination of clumsy boisterousness and fine sensibility is well brought out in Polemon's conversation with the cool, shrewd man of the world, Pataecus, who points out to him that he has no legal claim to his mistress:

PATAECUS [5]

If this that has befallen were of some such sort
As, Polemon, you say; if you a wedded wife —

POLEMON (*excitedly*)

Now how you talk, Pataecus! But what matters it?
I've held her as my wedded wife.

PATAECUS

Don't bawl, don't bawl!
And who gave her away?

POLEMON

To me? She gave herself.

[5] From The Loeb Classical Library, reprinted by permission.

PATAECUS

All right. Perhaps you pleased her then, but now, no more.
And she has gone for good because you treated her
In ways unseemly.

POLEMON

What? "Unseemly?" This your word
Beyond all else has cut me deep.

PATAECUS

You will admit —
(Of this I'm certain) — that what you are doing now
Is crazy. Where, for instance, are you rushing? Or
To capture whom? For she is mistress of herself.
There's one course left, persuasion for the wretched man,
The lover.

POLEMON

Well, but he that has corrupted her
When I was absent? He, you'll own, does wrong to me.

PATAECUS

He wrongs you, yes, enough for you to lodge complaint
If ever you shall come to argument. But if
You kidnap her by force, they'll have the law of you.
This wrong calls not for private vengeance but complaint.

POLEMON

Not now, then — ?

PATAECUS

No, not even now.

POLEMON

Then what to say
I know not, by Demeter, save I'm like to choke.

My Glycera has gone and left me! Left me, gone!
My Glycera, Pataecus! Nay, if so you think
It's best — for you are well acquainted and with her
You've often chatted — you go first and have a talk,
Be my ambassador, I pray you.

PATAECUS (*about to go*)
I agree,
You see, to that.

POLEMON (*detains him*)
You're good at speaking, I presume,
Pataecus?

PATAECUS
Pretty fair.

POLEMON
Indeed there's need of it,
Pataecus; nay, my whole salvation hangs on this.
For if I've ever done her wrong in any way —
If I don't always care for her devotedly —
If you'd but look upon her finery —
(*Motions toward his house, inviting Pataecus in.*)

PATAECUS (*soothingly*)
Oh, that's
All right.

POLEMON
Just take a look, Pataecus, by the gods!
You'll pity me the more.

PATAECUS (*aside*)
Poseidon!

POLEMON

Here! come here!
What dresses! what an air she has when she's dressed up
In this or that! Nay, come. You never saw, perhaps.

PATAECUS

O, yes, I have.

POLEMON

Why, just their grandeur, I may say,
Were worth a look. But why drag in this "grandeur" now,
Crazed that I am, to chatter thus beside the point?

PATAECUS (*reassuringly*)

Oh, not at all, by Zeus.

POLEMON (*pressing him on to the house*)

You think not? But at least
You'll have to see them. Step this way.

PATAECUS

You first.

POLEMON

I go.

(*Polemon and Pataecus enter the house of Polemon.*)

— F. G. ALLINSON

The incoherence of the excited soldier gives us a deep insight into his soul. Our sense of justice is completely satisfied when, in spite of his rudeness, he finally takes his beloved home as his wife. Light and shadow are uniformly distributed among all the characters: neither Polemon nor Glycera nor Pataecus nor Moschion is wholly without fault.

With still finer touches, Menander elaborates the character of the soldier, whom Roman Comedy knows only as the duped braggart, in his comedy *The Hated Man*, which at present is but insufficiently known. The soldier Thrasonides had captured in war the beautiful Crateia and fell madly in love with his captive. But she resists his imperious courtship, and he, though racked by all the tortures of love and jealousy, has enough self-control not to touch his bondwoman, for he desires to captivate her heart, not merely to possess her body. When Crateia's father later appears and ransoms her, the noble self-conquest of the once hated admirer is rewarded: Crateia prefers him to another suitor.

This ability to set familiar comic types in a new light by means of delicate character delineation is illustrated by the character of the slave Davus in *The Hero*, which has already been mentioned. The jolly, impudent and cunning slave was an old favorite among the characters of comedy. In Menander, too, this character occurs again and again in many variations. In *The Hero*, however, the slave Davus seems to stand morally higher than the middle-class society around him. The manner in which he confides to another slave, a hardened rogue, his love for Plangon and his resolute refusal to make illicit approaches to the girl exhibit refreshing charm and purity. I quote the scene, whose conclusion is unfortunately mutilated; yet it is of great importance to us because it is the only opening scene extant

and displays Menander's art of exposition in the best light.

GETAS [6]

You've been and done, I'm thinking, Davus, something bad,
Some great, big mischief; and you're taking on because
You look for gyves and treadmill — plain as plain can be.
If not, what means such frequent beating of your head?
Or why stop short and pluck your hair? Or why these groans?

DAVUS

Ah me!

GETAS

Just so. That's what it is, poor rascal, you!
Then ought you not, if you've been lucky and amassed
Some little savings, to have handed them the while
To me, that you might get them back when you've arranged
Your business? For I'm grieved, I too, along with you
Who suffer much distress.

DAVUS

I don't know what you mean.
That's nonsense. This affair is bad, quite different,
Wherein I'm coiled. I'm ruined, Getas, utterly!

GETAS

But how, you cursèd fool?

DAVUS

Nay, by the gods, good sir,
Curse not a lover.

[6] From The Loeb Classical Library, reprinted by permission

GETAS

What? A lover, you?

DAVUS

I am.

GETAS

Your master gives you more than double rations, then.
A bad thing, Davus. You, perchance, are overfed.

DAVUS

'Tis somewhat with my heart that's wrong as I behold
A harmless maiden, Getas, in my station reared.

GETAS

So she's a slave?

DAVUS

Yes — partly — in a fashion — yes.
You see, Tibeius was a shepherd dwelling here
In Ptelea, though once a house-slave in his youth.
To him, as he gave out the tale, these babies, twins,
Were born — this Plangon, she with whom I am in love —

GETAS

Ah, now I understand.

DAVUS

— and Gorgias, the lad —

GETAS

The one now here with us who has our sheep in charge?

DAVUS

Yes, he. Tibeius, then, the father, being old,
Receives a mina from my master as a loan

For their support, and then a second one — for times
Were hard — and then he dried up, skin and bone.

GETAS

Yes, when
Your master, haply, would not give him number three?

DAVUS

Perhaps. However, when he died, this Gorgias
Secured some little cash and buried him, and then,
When he had done what custom calls for, came to us
And brought along his sister and is living here
And working off the debt.

GETAS

But Plangon, what of her?

DAVUS

She's living with my mistress. As her task she works
The wool and serves.

GETAS

A maiden serves!

DAVUS

She's perfectly –
You're laughing at me, Getas!

GETAS

By Apollo, no!

DAVUS

She's perfectly the lady, Getas, modest too!

GETAS

But what of you? What are you doing for yourself
In your affair?

DAVUS

Clandestinely, good Heracles,
I've made her no advances, but have said my say
To master and he's promised she shall be my mate
When with her brother he has talked it out.

GETAS

Well, then,
That's fine for you.

DAVUS

You call it fine? Why, he's from home
In Lemnos three months now on business of his own.
May he come safe from there! For now to this same hope
We're clinging still.

— F. G. ALLINSON

Here the continuity breaks off, but the extant passage is enough to show the affection with which Menander sketched the young slave. Among the many slaves of ancient comedy one searches in vain for another such youth, pure and fresh.

It is probably no accident that the Roman comedians failed to adapt this play as they did *The Girl with Shorn Locks;* the austere, lordly pride of the Romans would not allow the human element to be emphasized with such sympathy in a slave. This Davus must have seemed strange even to the Attic audience; and if Menander's success in his lifetime was in no wise brilliant, surely a contributing cause for his unpopularity was his lofty and independent attitude in ethical matters.

His views of men and circumstances were different from

those of the Attic Philistines, and sometimes, as a result of his philosophical training, he raises questions of great importance to his own mind, for which, however, his audiences were entirely unready.

The Arbitrants, our most nearly complete play, furnishes the best examples. A thorough examination of this comedy will give the most accurate picture of Menander's art, with all its excellences and imperfections. The situation assumed is again entirely conventional and improbable. Charisius, an Attic young man of good family, who lives in a suburb, has, while intoxicated at a night festival for women, violated Pamphila, the daughter of the wealthy and close-fisted Smicrines, and left his seal ring in her hands. A few months later he marries Pamphila without either recognizing the other. This improbability, which appears strange to us moderns, was not offensive to an ancient audience. A younger comic poet, Apollodorus, used the same incident in his comedy *The Mother-in-Law*, which Terence adapted. Moreover, Gustav Freytag has ventured to do almost the same in his *Graf Waldemar*. During a prolonged journey of her husband, Pamphila, five months after her marriage, gave birth to a boy, whom she, for fear of her husband, caused to be exposed with the help of Sophrona, her old nurse. The crafty slave Onesimus had learned of this occurrence and informed Charisius upon his return. Charisius is mad with rage; although he does not repudiate Pamphila, whom, in spite of all, he deeply loves, yet he keeps entirely away

from her and tries to drown his grief in riotous carousal in the house of his friend and neighbor Chaerestratus. He also engages a pretty harp-girl, Abrotonon, to come from the city to his friend's house, but so far has made no advances to her. A conversation between an inquisitive cook and Charisius' slave Onesimus, preserved to us only in fragments, and perhaps also the latter's monologue, which immediately followed, put the audience in possession of facts necessary to an understanding of the essential points of the situation. Next Smicrines, Charisius' father-in-law, appears. He had heard, in the city, all kinds of rumors about the dissolute conduct of his son-in-law and desires to investigate, more in anxiety for the dowry than for his daughter. Since he does not find his son-in-law at home — he is in the house of his neighbor Chaerestratus — he enters his daughter's house to hear her story. This concludes the first act, which we possess only in fragments. The second apparently began with Smicrines' account of the unsuccessful interview which he had had with his daughter; Pamphila is stubborn and denies that Charisius has in any way mistreated her. While the ill-humored old man is sullenly preparing to return to the city, he notices two quarreling slaves; here begins the first completely preserved scene, which gives the play its name. The parties to the quarrel are the shepherd Davus and the charcoal-man Syriscus; the latter is accompanied by his wife, a mute figure, carrying a baby. I quote the whole scene:

SYRISCUS [7]

You'd shun what's fair.

DAVUS

And you, unchancy, blackmail me.

SYRISCUS

You have no right to what's not yours.

DAVUS

Let's leave the case

To some third person.

SYRISCUS

I agree.

DAVUS

Let's arbitrate.

SYRISCUS

Who shall it be?

DAVUS

For my part anyone will do.

(*Aside*) It serves me right for why did I go shares with you?

Enter Smicrines.]

SYRISCUS (*indicating Smicrines*)

Will you take *him* as judge?

DAVUS

Luck help me, yes!

SYRISCUS (*to Smicrines*)

Good sir,

Now, by the gods, could you give us a moment's time?

[7] From The Loeb Classical Library, reprinted by permission.

SMICRINES

Give you? And wherefore?

SYRISCUS

We've a question in dispute.

SMICRINES

What's that to me, pray?

SYRISCUS

Some impartial judge for this
We're seeking now, and so, if nothing hinders you,
Adjust our quarrel.

SMICRINES

Rascals marked for misery!
In goatskins dressed, do you debate and prate of law?

SYRISCUS

But none the less — the matter's short and easily
Decided — grant the favour, father. By the gods,
Do not despise us, for at all times it behooves
That justice gain the upper hand, yes, everywhere,
And every one that comes along should look to this
And make it his concern. It is the common lot
We all must share.

DAVUS (*aside*)

I've grappled no mean orator,
Why did I give him part in this?

SMICRINES

Will you abide
By my decision? Say.

SYRISCUS *and* DAVUS (*together*)

Of course.

SMICRINES

I'll hear. For what's
To hinder? (*To Davus*) You! you close-mouthed fellow there! Speak first.

DAVUS

I'll start a little further back, not simply tell
His part, that I may make the matter plain to you.
Within this bushy thicket here, hard by this place
My flock I was a-herding, now, perhaps, good sir,
Some thirty days gone by, and I was all alone,
When I came on a little infant child exposed
With necklace and with some such other ornaments.

SYRISCUS (*interrupting*)

About just these our quarrel!

DAVUS

He won't let me speak!

SMICRINES (*to Syriscus*)

If you put in your chatter, with this stick of mine
I'll fetch you one.

DAVUS

And serve him right.

SMICRINES (*to Davus*)

Speak on.

DAVUS

I will.
I took him up and with him went off to my house,
I had in mind to rear him — 'twas my notion then —
But over night came counsel, as it does to all,
And with myself I reasoned: " What have I to do

With rearing children and the trouble? Where shall I
Find so much money? Why take on anxieties? "
Thus minded was I. Back unto my flock again
At daybreak. Came this fellow — he's a charcoal-man —
Unto this selfsame place to saw out tree-stumps there.
Now he had had acquaintance with me heretofore,
And so we fell to talking. Noticing my gloom
Says he, " Why's Davus anxious? " " Now why not? " says I,
" For I'm a meddler." And I tell him of the facts;
How I had found, how owned the child. And straightway
then,
Ere I could tell him everything, he begged and begged;
" So, Davus, blessed be your lot! " at every word
Exclaiming. Then: " Give me the baby! *So*, good luck
Be yours! *So*, be you free! For I've a wife," says he,
" And she gave birth unto a baby and it died " —
(Meaning this woman here that holds the baby now) —

SMICRINES (*to Syriscus*)

You begged?

DAVUS (*to Syriscus, who at first fails to answer*)

Syriscus!

SYRISCUS

Yes, I did.

DAVUS

The live-long day
He pestered me, and when he urged, entreated me,
I promised him; I gave the child, and off he went
Calling down countless blessings, seized my hands and kissed
And kissed them.

SMICRINES (*to Syriscus*)
You did this?

SYRISCUS
I did.

DAVUS
Well, off he went.
Just now he meets me with his wife, and suddenly
Lays claim to all the things then with the child exposed —
(Now these were small and worthless, merely nothing) —
claims
That he should have them; says he's treated scurvily
Because I will not give them, claim them for myself.
But I declare he'd better feel some gratitude
For what he did get by his begging. If I fail
To give him all, no need to bring me to account.
Even if walking with me he had found these things,
And 'twere a " Share-all Windfall," he had taken this,
I that. But when I made the find alone, do you,

(*to Syriscus*)
Although you were not by, do you, I say, expect
To have it all yourself, and not one thing for me?
In fine, I gave you of my own with all good will:
If this still pleases you, then keep it even now,
But if it doesn't suit and if you've changed your mind,
Why, then return it. Don't commit nor suffer wrong.
But 'twere not fair that you get all, by my consent
In part, and, partly, forcing me. I've said my say.

SYRISCUS
Has said his say?

SMICRINES

You're deaf? He's said his say.

SYRISCUS

All right,

Then I come after. All alone this fellow found
The baby. Yes, and all of this he's telling now
He tells correctly, father, and it happened so.
I do not contradict. I did entreat and beg
And I received it from him. Yes, he tells the truth.
A certain shepherd, fellow labourer of his,
With whom he had been talking, then brought word to me
That with the baby he had found some ornaments.
To claim these things, see, father, he is here himself!
Give me the baby, wife.

(*Takes the child from his wife's arms.*)

Now, Davus, here from you
He's asking back the necklace and birth-tokens too,
For he declares that these were placed upon himself
For his adorning, not for eking out your keep.
I too join in, and ask for them, as guardian —
On giving him you made me that. (*To Smicrines*) And now, good sir,
Methinks 'tis yours to settle whether it be right
These golden trinkets and whatever else there be,
As given by his mother, whosoe'er she was,
Be put by for the baby till he come of age,
Or this footpad who stripped him is to have these things,
That others own, provided that he found them first!
" Why didn't I," you'll say, " when first I took the child,
Demand them then of you? " It was not then as yet

Within my power to speak thus in the child's behalf,
And even now I'm here demanding no one thing
That's mine, mine only. "Windfall! Share-all!" None of
that!
No "finding" when 'tis question of a person wronged.
That is not "finding," nay, but outright filching that!
And look at this too, father. Maybe this boy here
Was born above our station. Reared 'mongst working-folk
He will despise our doings, his own level seek
And venture on some action suiting noble birth:
Will go a-lion hunting; carry arms; or run
A race at games. You've seen the actors act, I know,
And all of this you understand. Those heroes once,
Pelias, Neleus, by an aged man were found,
A goatherd in his goatskin dressed as I am now,
And, when he noticed they were better born than he,
He tells the matter, how he found, how took them up,
He gave them back their wallet, with birth-tokens filled.
And thus they found out clearly all their history,
And they, the one-time goatherds, afterwards were kings.
But had a Davus found those things and sold them off,
That he might profit by twelve drachmas for himself,
Through all the coming ages they had been unknown
Who were such great ones and of such a pedigree.
And so it is not fitting, father, that I here
Should rear his body and that Davus seize meanwhile
His life's hope for the future, make it disappear.
A youth about to wed his sister once was stopped
By just such tokens. One a mother found and saved,
And one a brother. Since, O father, all men's lives
Are liable to dangers, we must watch, look out,
With forethought far ahead for what is possible.

" Well, if you are not suited, give him back," says he.
This is his stronghold in the matter, as he thinks.
But that's not just. If you must give up what is his,
Then in addition do you claim to have the child
That more securely you may play the rogue again
If some of his belongings Fortune has preserved?
I've said my say. (*To Smicrines*) Give verdict as you hold is just.

SMICRINES

Well, this decision's easy: " All that was exposed
Together with the child goes with him," I decide.

DAVUS

All right. But now, the child?

SMICRINES

By Zeus, I won't decide
He's yours who wrong him, but he's his who came to aid,
This man's, who stood against you, you who'd injure him.

SYRISCUS

Now yours be many blessings!

DAVUS

Nay, a verdict rank!
By Zeus the saviour! I, the sole discoverer,
Am stripped of all and he who did not find receives!
Am I to hand these over?

SMICRINES

Yes.

DAVUS

A verdict rank —
Else may no blessing ever light on me!

SYRISCUS

Here, quick!

DAVUS

Good Heracles, how I am treated!

SYRISCUS

Loose your sack
And show us, for it's there you carry them —

(*To Smicrines, about to leave*)

Nay, stop,
I beg, a little, till he gives them up.

DAVUS (*aside*)

Why did
I let him judge our case?

SMICRINES

Come, give, you quarry-slave!

DAVUS (*handing over the tokens*)

What shameful treatment!

SMICRINES (*to Syriscus*)

Have you all?

SYRISCUS

I think so, yes.

SMICRINES

You have, unless he swallowed something down while I
Gave verdict of conviction.

SYRISCUS

Hardly that, I think.
(*To Smicrines, who turns to leave*)

Nay, then, good sir, may Luck attend you. Such as you
I'd sooner have the judges all.

[*Exit Smicrines to City.*

DAVUS

But how unjust,
O Heracles! This verdict, was it not too rank?

SYRISCUS

You were a rascal, rascal you!

DAVUS

Look out yourself,
Yes, you now, that you keep these trinkets safe for him.
Aye, mark you well, I'll ever have an eye on you.

[*Exit Davus.*

SYRISCUS (*calling after him*)

Go hang! Go gang your gait! But you, my wife, take these
And carry them in here to our young master's house.
For meanwhile here we will await Chaerestratus
And in the morning we'll start off to work again
When we have made our payment. Stop. Let's count them first.
Count over, one by one. Have you a basket there?
Well, loose your dress and drop them in.

— F. G. ALLINSON

The charm of this scene, which was much admired even in antiquity, consists essentially in the masterly delineation of the characters. It must have affected the Attic audience as deeply as it did the arbitrator Smicrines. First of all, the idea that slaves can come to a legal settlement of a dispute strikes him as curious, and his attitude is that of rejecting

their request to act as arbiter; but soon the delight in verbal contests, innate in every Athenian, seizes him; finally, he becomes interested heart and soul, and gladly passes sentence. The two speakers remain strictly within the limits of their class; there is no trace of artistic rhetoric, but in spite of their servile condition they have at their command the natural eloquence of the Athenian of the fourth century. We northerners are even today taken aback by the rhetorical gifts of Greek peasants. The two slaves are clearly distinguished. Davus is the cruder; he firmly believes that he is right, and until the end it does not penetrate his hard head that an exposed child may have legal rights. Syriscus is not only more kind-hearted but also more refined; he had seen tragedies, and his imagination invests the lot of the child with an air of romance. His statement of the supposition that the boy when grown up might be inclined to go lion-hunting certainly must have provoked merriment among the audience, since harmless hares were the only game which Attica, with its dearth of wild animals, possessed. By putting forward the child himself as the party seeking legal redress, he goes beyond the limits of Attic law then in force, for throughout antiquity exposed children were always considered legally as objects rather than as persons with legal rights. Here the poet speaks; he stands above contemporary ideas and puts into the mouth of a simple man a notion which, on reflection, shows a finer feeling of justice.

The thought will hardly occur to a reader of this scene, so simply and so exquisitely executed, that Menander borrowed its essential elements from Euripides. In the latter's *Alope*, the heroine (named in the title) bore a son to Poseidon, and for fear of her father, Cercyon, she had the child exposed by her nurse. The child, wrapped in a royal robe, was found by a shepherd, who took it into his hut. Another shepherd asked for the child and received it without the robe. This robe leads to a quarrel between the shepherds, and in order to have it settled they betake themselves to the king, Cercyon. Cercyon recognizes his daughter's robe, forces the nurse to a confession, throws the girl into prison and causes the child to be exposed anew. Thus Menander borrowed from tragedy not only the quarreling shepherds but also the unsuspecting grandfather of the child as arbitrant; but how much more exquisitely did he fashion the *dénouement!* Cercyon does not pass any sentence, and the recognition of the child only gives him an occasion to destroy daughter and grandchild; Menander, on the other hand, makes Smicrines deliver a righteous judgment without knowing the child's descent and thus unknowingly secure the happiness of his daughter and his grandchild. How much store the poet set by this arbitration scene is apparent from the fact that he named the play after it, although in the structure of the play as a whole its value seems to be only that of an episode.

Syriscus is unable to rejoice in his victory for long. When he examines the birth tokens and views a seal ring with

especial care, this ring attracts the attention of the slave Onesimus, who is leaving the house of Chaerestratus; with amazement Onesimus recognizes it as the long-lost ring of his master, Charisius. In spite of the charcoal-man's resistance, Onesimus takes it from him to show it to his master.

Here again a note, "Chorus," indicates the end of the second act, but the choral song has not been handed down. Nor was the attempt made to connect the chorus with the action. At the beginning of Act III there appear successively the lute-girl Abrotonon, who complains that Charisius refuses to have anything to do with her — a significant feature for the delineation of Charisius' character; then Onesimus, who has not yet dared to show the ring to his master; and Syriscus, who impetuously but vainly demands its return. Onesimus knows that his master lost his ring at the last celebration of the Tauropolia; he divines that an affair with a woman is involved, and for this reason he hesitates to bring it to his agitated and moody master. With true feminine curiosity Abrotonon meddles, and soon the crafty girl hatches a most charming scheme with the sly slave. This scene I quote:

ABROTONON [3]

Was it this charcoal-man, Onesimus, who found
The baby boy the woman's nursing now indoors?

ONESIMUS

Yes, so he says.

[3] From The Loeb Classical Library, reprinted by permission.

ABROTONON

O what a dainty child, poor thing!

ONESIMUS

And this ring here was on him. 'Tis my master's ring.

ABROTONON

Fie, luckless, fie! If, then, it's your young master's child
For certain, will you see it brought up like a slave?
You ought to die. 'Twould serve you right!

ONESIMUS

'Tis as I say,
Its mother no one knows.

ABROTONON

He lost the ring, you say,
During the feast of Tauropolia?

ONESIMUS

Yes, he
Was in his cups — at least, the slave attending him
Informed me so.

ABROTONON

Of course! And then alone he came
Upon the women as they made a night of it.
I know, for once just such a thing as this occurred
When I was by.

ONESIMUS

When *you* were by?

ABROTONON

Why yes, last year
At Tauropolia. For maids I thrummed the lute

And I myself played with them. Then — that is — not yet
Had I had knowledge of man's way and what it is —
That's true as true, by Aphrodite!

ONESIMUS

But the girl?
Who was she? Can you tell me that?

ABROTONON

I could inquire.
She was the women's friend, the women whom I served.

ONESIMUS

And who's her father? Heard you that?

ABROTONON

Nay, I know naught
Except I'd know her if I once caught sight of her.
A handsome girl, ye gods! and she's a wealthy one,
They said.

ONESIMUS

It may be she's the one.

ABROTONON

I do not know.
But thus it was: while with us there she wandered off
And of a sudden then she comes back on a run
Alone, and bathed in tears, and tearing at her hair.
Her silken Tarentine so very beautiful —
Ye gods, diaphanous! — was ruined utterly,
For it was all in tatters.

ONESIMUS

Did she have this ring?

ABROTONON

Perhaps she had it but she did not let me see —
For I'll not try to cheat you.

ONESIMUS

Well, what now am I
To do about it?

ABROTONON

Look you here! If you have sense
And will obey me, you will make this matter clear
And tell your master. If the baby's mother be
A free-born girl, what need to keep him in the dark
About the circumstances?

ONESIMUS

Well, Abrotonon,
First thing of all now let's discover who she is.
And so, with this in view, I want you to —

ABROTONON (*interrupting*)

Nay, stop!
I could not do it till I clearly know the one
Who wronged her. This I fear — to let out anything
At random to those women whom I tell you of.
Who knows but that some boon-companion present then
Got it as pledge from him and lost it afterwards
When playing dice? He gave it as security,
Perhaps, to back some contribution. Or, perchance,
Agreeing on some wager, may have been involved
And so have given it. When men are in their cups
No end of things like that are apt to come about.
But till I know who wronged her I'll not search for her
Nor even tell a word of this.

ONESIMUS

That's not half bad.

But what is one to do?

ABROTONON

Look you, Onesimus!

Will you, I ask you, fall in with this scheme of mine?
As my affair I'll treat the matter — as my own.
This ring here I will take and then go in to him.

ONESIMUS

Say what you mean — though I begin to understand.

ABROTONON

He'll notice that I have it. Where I got it from
He'll ask. I'll say: "At Tauropolia, when I
Was virgin still." And everything that then befell
That other girl I'll make my own, for I myself
Know pretty much the whole.

ONESIMUS

That beats the universe!

ABROTONON

Now, if he did it, straight into the trap he'll fall
And, just now being drunk, he'll be the first to speak,
And fluently, of all details; but I'll agree
And back up all he says; no single slip I'll make
By speaking first.

ONESIMUS

Delightful! Good! By Helios!

ABROTONON

And I'll be coy in talk, and, lest I make a slip,

Will work in hackney'd things like: " What a man you were!
How vehement and shameless! "

ONESIMUS

Good!

ABROTONON

" How rough you were,
And threw me down! And what a dress I spoiled, poor me! "
I'll say. But first, within the house, I'll take the child
And weep, and kiss it; where she got it from, I'll ask
The one who has it.

ONESIMUS

Heracles!

ABROTONON

To cap it all
I'll say: " So here you have a baby born to you!
And I will show the foundling.

ONESIMUS

O Abrotonon,
A master-stroke of malice and of roguery!

ABROTONON

If this shall be established and he's shown to be
Its father, at our leisure then we'll seek the girl.

ONESIMUS

That other point you're holding back: you'll be set free.
For, thinking you the mother of his child, of course
He'll buy your freedom instantly.

ABROTONON

I wish he might,
But I don't know.

ONESIMUS

Ah, don't you though? At any rate,
Abrotonon, are not thanks due to me for this?

ABROTONON

By the Twain Goddesses, of course. All this my luck
At least I'll give you credit for.

ONESIMUS

Then here's a point:
What if on purpose you stop looking for the girl,
Ignore the matter, and go back on me?

ABROTONON

You fool!
Why should I? Daft on babies am I, do you think?
May I but merely get my liberty! O gods,
May I get that as wage for this!

ONESIMUS

God grant you may.

ABROTONON

Is it a bargain then?

ONESIMUS

A bargain, certainly.
For if you play your tricks on me, I'll fight you then;
I'll have the vantage ground. But, as things stand, let's see
If this now turns out well.

ABROTONON

All right, then you agree?

ONESIMUS

Of course.

ABROTONON

The ring, then, hand it over — do. Be quick.

ONESIMUS (*giving the ring*)

Well, take it then.

ABROTONON (*taking the ring*)

Persuasion dear, as my ally
Stand by me, make to prosper everything I say!

[*Exit Abrotonon into the house of Charestratus.*

— F. G. ALLINSON

The combination of kind-heartedness and calculation on the part of the music girl, who is certainly no model of virtue, but who in her merry charm is akin to Goethe's *Philine*, again shows Menander's fine art in its best light.

The scheme of the crafty pair succeeds. While Abrotonon plays her rôle within, Smicrines appears from the city for the second time, where, in all probability, he has heard more of the dissipated life of his son-in-law.

The following scenes are much mutilated, but the lines of development are still recognizable. Smicrines hears from the garrulous cook that Charisius has acknowledged the music girl Abrotonon's illegitimate child as his own and that both she and her child are at his house. This cuts the ground from under his feet. In fury Smicrines rushes into the house to take his daughter from her profligate husband. The opening of Act IV brings on the stage Smicrines with Pamphila, who is still resisting separation from her husband. Menander ventures here to show on the stage the

seduced daughter of a respectable Athenian citizen, a thing which the Roman comic poets always shun and the Attic poets for the most part apparently avoid. The arguments by which the old man seeks to induce his daughter to leave her husband are predominantly of a financial rather than of an ethical nature. Charisius will soon be ruined if he keeps the music girl with her illegitimate child in the house by the side of his wife; only a separation can save the dowry. A friend of Charisius gives the young woman a reason that seems more weighty: that she would be unable to hold her own against an experienced wench, especially since the latter's position is reinforced by the fact of her being the mother of Charisius' child. Nevertheless Pamphila does not follow her father, who is returning to the city; apparently she asks for a brief respite. At this juncture, as she is bewailing her lot in front of the door of her house, Abrotonon appears from the neighbor's house with a crying infant in her arms. The two women recognize each other quickly, and thereby the *dénouement* really takes place. But the poet first presents to us the moral effect of Abrotonon's intrigue upon Charisius. The young husband believes himself the father of Abrotonon's child; he has overheard the conversation between Smicrines and Pamphila, and a deep repentance of his former harshness towards his wife gnaws at his heart. Menander attached great value to the following soliloquy of Charisius, for he carefully paves the way for it by the preceding statement of Onesimus, that his master is going

crazy, is plucking his hair and is violently accusing himself. Then Charisius appears from the house of Chaerestratus and speaks the following lines:

CHARISIUS [9]

The sinless saint I was, mine eyes on honour fixed!
Could scan the noble and disgraceful, which is which,
Myself so innocent and spotless in my life! —
Right well and very fittingly the power divine
Has used me — here but human I'm shown up to be.
" You thrice-unlucky, puffed-up boastful chatterer,
Your wife's involuntary ill-luck you'll not bear.
But I will show that you have stumbled just as much.
To you she'll then be kind, but you dishonour her,
And you shall be shown up to have become at once
A luckless and a loutish and unfeeling man.
Most like indeed to your thoughts then was what but now
She said unto her father: ' Partner of his life
I come and, being such, I must not shirk ill-luck
When it befalls.' But you were high and mighty, you! "

— F. G. ALLINSON

Here the papyrus unfortunately breaks off, and we can only gather from a recently discovered small papyrus fragment that Charisius' soliloquy resulted in the decision to retain his wife in defiance of her father.

This soliloquy, in which the peccadillos of the sexes are put on the same footing, is the greatest surprise which the Menander finds have yielded. Here the poet is ahead of his

[9] From The Loeb Classical Library, reprinted by permission.

time not by centuries but by millennia; I at least know of no drama before Björnson's *Handschuh* which has ventured to give a similar decision to this problem. Charisius now is ready for the redeeming word which, indeed, Abrotonon utters to his joy. Everything is now clear to all concerned, except old Smicrines; when he, accompanied by his daughter's nurse, appears to take her, along with her dowry, back to the city, the insolent Onesimus lustily jeers at him, in order that the play, which has gradually become more serious and thoughtful, may have a merry ending. This scene may also be quoted, because in its combination of serious thought and coarse gaiety it is very characteristic of Menander.

SMICRINES (*to himself*) [10]

If I don't crack that head of yours, O Sophrona,
May deep damnation seize me! You'd admonish me?
You too? I'm headstrong, am I, taking home my girl?
You hag, you temple-looter! I'm to wait about
Till this fine lord of hers shall eat up what I gave
As dowry? And am I to bandy arguments
About my own? To that would you persuade me, you?
Were it not better quick to take the upper hand?
You'll rue it bitterly if you wag tongue again.
What? I discuss the case with Sophrona as judge?
"Persuade her to a change when you get sight of her!"
As so I hope for blessing, *you* 'tis I'll persuade.
For, Sophrona, on my way home — you've seen the pond
As you've passed by — well, there I'll make an end of you

[10] From The Loeb Classical Library, reprinted by permission.

And souse you under all the livelong night, until
I make you think my thoughts and stop your taking part
Against me.

(*Approaches the door of Charisius's house.*)

I must bang this door. It's locked. Boys! Boy!
Let someone open! Boys! Do I not order you?

(*Onesimus opens the door and comes out, but bars the entrance to Smicrines.*)

ONESIMUS

Who's knocking at the door? Oh, is it Smicrines,
The tough one, for the dowry and his daughter come?

SMICRINES

You're right. It's I, you thrice accursèd scamp.

ONESIMUS

Quite so,
Indeed! 'Tis like a calculator, very keen,
This energy! And this kidnapping, Heracles,
A perfect marvel this!

SMICRINES

By gods and deities!

ONESIMUS (*didactically*)

Now do you think that gods have leisure time to spare
For parcelling the good and ill, day in, day out,
To each and all, O Smicrines?

SMICRINES

What do you mean?

ONESIMUS

I will instruct you clearly. In the world, all told,
Roughly there are one thousand cities, and in each

Dwell thirty thousand. Do you think that each of them,
Each several one, the gods preserve or ruin?

SMICRINES

What!
If that were true, the gods would live a life of toil!

ONESIMUS

" Well, do not then the gods look out for us? " you'll say.
To each of us they have allotted Character
As garrison-commander. Ever present, he
Brings one to ruin, whoso seems to use him ill;
Another man he saves. Our deity is this,
And he's responsible for each man's faring well
Or badly. Him propitiate by doing naught
That's boorish or outlandish, that you prosper well.

SMICRINES

Well, then, you temple-looter, is *my* character
Now doing aught that's boorish?

ONESIMUS

It is smashing you!

SMICRINES

Why, what impertinence!

ONESIMUS

Well, do you call it " good "
From husband to divorce one's daughter, Smicrines?

SMICRINES

Who says it's *good?* 'Tis now necessity.

ONESIMUS

You see?
This man sets down what's base as a necessity!

Some other, not his Character, destroyeth him.
And you, now, started full tilt for a wicked deed,
Haphazard luck has saved and for these ills you'll find
Adjustment and release. But let me, Smicrines,
Not find you headstrong any more! I tell you that
Yet from these allegations stand acquitted now.
Go you within. Take up your daughter's child and give
Your blessing to it.

(*Onesimus stands aside and motions towards the door.*)

SMICRINES

Daughter's child, you whipping-post?

ONESIMUS

You were a fathead, you, and thought yourself so smart!
So carefully you watched your marriageable child!
And therefore five-months' infants, first class prodigies,
We rear!

SMICRINES

I don't know what you mean.

ONESIMUS

But that old crone,
I'm thinking, knows. For master, at the Festival
Of Tauropolia —

SMICRINES (*calling into the house*)

Ho! Sophrona!

ONESIMUS

He caught
And drew her from the dance and — Get my meaning?

SMICRINES

Yes.

ONESIMUS

And now they've had a recognition scene, and all
Is well.
Enter Sophrona from the house of Charisius.]

SMICRINES

What is he saying, temple-looting hag?

SOPHRONA (*who has overheard Onesimus*)

" 'Tis Nature willed it, unto whom no law's a bar,
And just for this was woman born."

SMICRINES

What's that? You're daft?

SOPHRONA

From Auge I'll declaim a tragic speech entire.
If you don't sometime soon wake up, O Smicrines.

SMICRINES

You stir my bile with your declaiming. Monstrous this
He's saying, you know well!

ONESIMUS (*interrupting*)

I know at least, know well,
The crone was first to see through this.

SMICRINES

Outrageous tale!

SOPHRONA

There's never been a greater piece of luck, not one!

— F. G. ALLINSON

The close of the play is lost, but this loss is not of great importance, as we are essentially at the end.

The Arbitrants testifies convincingly to Menander's mature art; at the same time it enables us to perceive its limitations. Compared to Aristophanes', Menander's creative imagination is poor, and the world which he depicts is narrow and petty. One is amazed that no breath of the great and world-stirring struggles which at that time created and destroyed states and which won world sway for Greek civilization penetrates into this Attic Philistine society. Menander's characters care little for affairs of state. Nor do they work; possession and enjoyment of life are the only aims they know. But the faithfulness with which Menander portrays the petty beings of this narrow world is neither insignificant nor tedious. Time and again we feel that spiritually the poet is far above his creations; time and again he forces us to meditate on problems which were quite beyond the intellectual horizon of his audience, but which, in part, concern mankind even today; more and more the indelible stamp of Attic grace which he knows how to imprint on his characters delights us. This last Attic and, at the same time, first Hellenistic poet — whose works have influenced so deeply and permanently the literature of the world — is not a creative genius of the highest rank, but a great artist of rare maturity and delicacy.

Compared with Menander, the other poets of the New Comedy are for us only pale shadows. Indeed, we are able to infer from the comedies of Plautus that a difference in style distinguished Menander from his most successful

rivals, Philemon and Diphilus, both older than he, yet both productive after his death. We also infer from Terence's *Mother-in-Law* that a younger poet, Apollodorus of Carystus, imitated and utterly spoiled Menander's *Arbitrants*. But only with the discovery of more extensive fragments of Egyptian papyri shall we be able to form a really distinct picture of the other poets of the New Comedy. Their loss, in our present state of knowledge, does not occasion serious grief, since it seems clear that the peculiar excellence of New Comedy — its emphasis on character delineation — is due to Menander.

Part II

ALEXANDRIA

PART II

ALEXANDRIA

In the winter of 332–1 the Great King had a city built by his gifted architect Deinocrates on the western rim of the Nile Delta opposite the small island of Pharus. It became his last resting place and still bears his name.

The city was planned from the outset on a large scale, and developed with amazing rapidity into the leading commercial center of the world. Ptolemy I Soter, the prudent and energetic founder of the Macedonian-Egpytian state, selected this city for his residence and furthered its growth with all his large resources. Both he and his no less proficient son Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285–246) used every means to make Alexandria the center, not only of international trade but also of the entire Hellenic spiritual life. The high pretensions of Alexandria appear clearly from a recently published anonymous Berlin papyrus [1] which probably belongs to the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus: "The other cities are cities of their adjacent country, but villages of Alexandria, for Alexandria is the city of the universe."

[1] *Berliner Klassikertexte*, Fasc. 7, pp. 17, 28.

Athens, which, since the Persian Wars, had indisputably maintained her intellectual predominance in the life of the Greeks, was to be dethroned in favor of Alexandria, and, so far as the provinces of poetry and the exact sciences were concerned, the Ptolemies succeeded completely. But the city on the Ilissus, lifeless and poor as it became, remained for centuries the only acknowledged center of philosophy.

Already Ptolemy I had endeavored to induce Menander, the most famous living poet, to move his residence to Alexandria. But the race-conscious Athenian did not accede to the invitations of the king; the younger generation, however, took the opposite point of view.

Of all the measures by which the Ptolemies aimed at making their capital the center of Greek culture, the establishment of the Museum with its enormous library was by far the most important. It is believed that its foundation was suggested by Demetrius of Phalerum, a friend of Menander and a pupil of Theophrastus, who for ten years, under Macedonian protection, ruled Athens wisely, and, after his downfall in 307, ultimately took refuge with Ptolemy I; in any case the plan of the library conforms to the spirit of the Peripatetic School. The library made it its task to collect the entire intellectual heritage of the Greeks, both prose and poetry. For a great part of Greek literature this meant salvation from sure destruction. If we are able today to read the tragedies of Aeschylus, the comedies of Aristophanes, the epinician odes of Pindar and Bacchylides, the

histories of Herodotus and Thucydides, we are indebted chiefly, if not entirely, to the Alexandrian Library. To be sure, only a small fraction of the vast number of literary works which found their way into the library at Alexandria has come down to us, but, were it not for the library, Aeschylus and Aristophanes, Pindar and Bacchylides, would already have fallen into oblivion by the first century A.D. It was high time for the systematic collection of the older lyric and dramatic poetry, since a good deal was already lost. The Alexandrians were unable to discover all the plays even of Euripides, who was the most widely read of the poets and whose plays were frequently performed; according to the records of the Athenian archives, as published by Aristotle, many Euripidean plays which the library did not contain were performed at Athens. To a still larger extent was this true of the older tragedians and the poets of the Old Attic Comedy. We know that the Alexandrians did not possess the second edition of Aristophanes' *Peace*, which was later unearthed by the Pergamenians; many plays of the other classic writers of Old Comedy, Cratinus and Eupolis, known by their titles, were lost; of some of the less important comedians only a single play, of others not even one reached Alexandria.

A little story told by the physician Galen neatly illustrates the ardent zeal and the not always unobjectionable methods by which the Ptolemies pursued their hunt for valuable manuscripts. Ptolemy III Euergetes borrowed from

the Athenians their state copy of the classical tragedians, Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides, against a pledge of fifteen talents (about sixteen thousand dollars). He caused a splendid transcript of it to be made and sent this back to the Athenians, forfeiting the pledge; the original remained at Alexandria.

The number of book rolls stored in the library amounted already in the reign of Ptolemy II to 490,000; to this may be added a smaller branch library established in the Serapeum with 42,800 rolls. These literary treasures themselves, compared with whose rich stores all other collections were of no account, attracted to Alexandria a great company of scholars whom the work at the library kept united.

Like the schools of philosophy, they formed a cult association dedicated to the service of the Muses. This cult had at its head a priest of the Muses, appointed by the king. The place of worship, the Museum, after which countless institutions devoted to art and science are still named,[2] was situated within the precincts of the royal palace and had, in addition to porches and exedras, a dining hall for meals in common. The members of the association received a stipend from the king, a new and striking idea for the Greeks. The caustic philosopher Timon therefore jeers at them in a lampoon:

[2] Our application of the word "Museum" to collections of art and of objects of scientific interest is really a misuse, since the Muses have nothing to do with plastic art or painting, still less with garments or machine models.

Egypt has its mad recluses,
Book-bewilder'd anchorites,
In the hen-coop of the Muses
Keeping up their endless fights.

— C. D. YONGE

The spiteful comparison of the Museum with a coop in which, instead of wild animals and exotic birds, that were much sought after since the oriental expedition of Alexander, the king for his pleasure feeds scholars and poets, was not without foundation. Financial dependence on a prince, even a humane and high-minded one, involved limitations which could very well be compared to a golden cage. The intimate connection of the Museum with the royal court found its expression also in the fact that the education of royal princes was for generations regularly entrusted to the head of the library; in other words the headship of the library was at the same time a high appointment in the royal household.

All who received a call to the task of arranging, sifting and editing these immense literary treasures were, as matters then stood, themselves poets, since poets alone had at their command the requisite knowledge of the older language and its various dialects; there was no philological science as yet. It was the research connected with these labors in the Alexandrian Library from which sprang the science that has for its goal the purification of the texts of poets and prose writers from the mistakes which crept into them

during centuries of copying, the search for the linguistic peculiarities of individual poets and of various classes of literature, the interpretation of their work with regard to form and content, the tracing of the development of the various kinds of poetry and the various personalities, and, finally, the comprehension of the entire literature of a nation in its genesis and change. Just as we owe the collection and cultivation of our older German literature in the first instance to our romanticists, men like Tieck and Uhland, whose own poetic activity exceeds their scholarly efforts, and just as in the next generation the brothers Grimm and Lachmann separated the new science of German philology from poetic activity, so among the Alexandrians philology in the course of several generations gradually parted company with poetry. Yet the founders of philological science considered themselves first of all poets and were in fact the outstanding poets of their age.

Thus the laborious task of sifting and arranging, roughly at first, the whole mass of poetic literature fell upon three men: the epic poet Zenodotus of Ephesus assumed the responsibility for epic poetry and most probably for lyric poetry also, the tragedian Alexander of Pleuron in Aetolia, for tragedy, and the tragedian Lycophron of Chalcis, for comedy.

A still more comprehensive and more difficult task was then assigned to the most eminent Alexandrian poet, Callimachus of Cyrene, namely, the compilation of a catalogue of

the entire library. Callimachus in the hundred and twenty books of his work supplied much more information than is expected of a library catalogue today: he included at the same time a lexicon of writers, and thereby laid the foundation for the history of Greek literature. We may fairly conjecture the plan of the work, whose influence can be traced down to the Byzantine period. To each writer were allotted a short biographical sketch and a list of his works, including the lost ones. The whole material was apparently classified according to large groups such as epic, lyric, tragedy, comedy, philosophy, oratory, history; what could not be thus pigeonholed was put into a separate group, "Miscellaneous." How inclusive the term literature was considered may be seen from the list of authors on cake-baking which has accidentally been preserved. Of each individual work the opening words were entered — the titles often varied — and the number of lines was specified; any doubts concerning the authenticity of the book were also noticed. Even if we suppose that in his work Callimachus had been assisted by a numerous staff, the mastery of this immense material remains a gigantic accomplishment, and never again has a library catalogue possessed so great an importance for the history of literature as did this first catalogue.

For the understanding of Hellenistic poetry one must never for a moment lose sight of the fact that the poets were predominantly scholars, and that other conditions of their life also greatly influenced their literary productions. In the

first place they lived in such a metropolis as the Greek world hitherto had not known. Into Alexander's artificially created city there streamed a huge multitude of persons whose interests were predominantly related to trade and commerce. The Greeks formed a most important, but by no means the only strong constituent; from the very beginning the Jewish colony was very strong, and, although it adopted the Greek language, it was strictly separated from the Greeks in belief and custom; moreover, the native Egyptian element in the course of time made its influence felt more and more. This huge, motley multitude had no common tradition of any sort, no anciently inherited cults and festivals, no common memories of past national heroism. There was no public, educated through generations and homogeneous in itself, to respond with enthusiasm to new productions of poetry, such as Sophocles, Euripides and Aristophanes enjoyed; the influence of the new poetry was limited to the numerically small class of the wealthy and educated. It seems that the wealthy merchants of the metropolis took only a slight interest in literature. In a recently found papyrus Callimachus describes a banquet in the house of the wealthy Athenian Pollis where he evidently feels very much alone in the hard-drinking company. The appreciative audience was therefore essentially limited to the circles closely connected with the Museum and the court. As in the France of Louis XIV, no poet could thrive permanently upon whom the sun of royal favor did not shine.

Finally, this too must be noticed, that never before had a Greek poet led a life so far remote from nature as did the inhabitants of Alexandria. After the manner of large modern cities, great masses of people were crowded together within a narrow compass, and even today the surroundings of Alexandria, if we omit the eternally fascinating sea, show comfortless desolation. There were no wooded mountains to be seen there, no bubbling brooks or fountains, no flowery meadows, no singing birds, no deer or hare, only bare, level plains, aqueducts, artificial groves and gardens with caged animals.

Not all the renowned poets, to be sure, lived permanently at Alexandria; only one of them, Apollonius, was born there, and even he is usually called, after his adopted country, the Rhodian. But the conditions in other royal cities, in Antioch or even Pella and Pergamon, were similar. Above all else, the small and exclusive circle of Alexandrian literati became the decisive factor in the success of a poet.

Even those who visited the metropolis on the Nile only in passing, or not at all, found themselves under the spell of the literary criticism there prevailing, of a criticism which, to say the least, had to be reckoned with. Thus the circle of the Alexandrian literati imprinted its stamp on the whole of Greek poetry.

To give a graphic account of the aspirations and endeavors of this highly talented generation of poets is a difficult task;

its diverse currents crisscross and the efforts of its members diverge into disparate tendencies.

The burden of a mighty tradition weighed heavily upon them. Through their learned studies at the great library they became thoroughly familiar with the entire field of Greek literature, from Homer to Menander; they were also familiar with the achievements of a long succession of poets in the various branches of poetry — poets who, without undue theorizing, had limited themselves to productions in their own chosen form. The attitude of the Alexandrians towards this overwhelming mass of classical literature with its fixed forms partakes at once of admiration and of criticism. The majority of them saw with sufficient clearness that they could not continue creating in the forms bequeathed to them, because these old forms could not embody the new messages of the newer poets. On the other hand their creative faculty was not strong enough to produce entirely new forms in the grand manner. So colossal a creation as was the invention of tragedy and comedy at the hands of the Athenians was far beyond the capacity of the Alexandrians. Hence arose the question, fundamental to the theoretic disputations which were fought in the third century with a bitterness reminiscent of the struggles of our own romanticists, to what extent the old forms might be retained and in what way they could be changed and refined for the new poetry. Just as Greek architecture never freed itself from the three classical orders, Doric, Ionic and Corinthian, but attained new

effects by continually changing, refining and combining these, so the Alexandrians attempted unceasingly to refine the old forms of classical poetry and to adapt them to themes to which they had previously been strange. They succeeded least of all in that branch of poetry which had occupied the central point of interest since the time of the Persian Wars, namely, the drama; neither in tragedy nor in comedy did the Alexandrians succeed in producing anything of lasting importance. They therefore consciously turned back to epic, elegiac and iambic poetry — forms which Athens, the dethroned queen of Greek intellectual life, had cultivated little or not at all — just as our own romanticists turned to medieval forms of poetry. While in former times an individual poet was, as it were, born into a definite branch of poetry, now he had the freedom of various forms and branches; he had only to choose the form he would use and his manner of using it. In the classical period every poet limited himself almost exclusively to a fixed branch of poetry; it is inconceivable that Pindar should have composed a tragedy, Sappho an epic, or Aeschylus a comedy; only in a drinking bout that had reached quite an advanced state did the Platonic Socrates wring from the poet Agathon the admission that "the writer of tragedy ought to be a writer of comedy also." Now things took a new turn. The majority of the notable Alexandrians cultivated several different departments of poetry: Alexander of Pleuron composed tragedies, epics, elegies, epigrams and Ionic songs;

Callimachus elegies, epigrams, hymns, iambi, songs and epics; Theocritus country and city mimes, epics, hymns, epigrams, iambi and Aeolic songs.

In spite of this versatility of the individual poets, I shall maintain my arrangement according to branches of poetry, because it permits a clearer survey; I do, however, reserve the right of not always adhering to a system of pigeonholing. I begin with the branch that received the most characteristic treatment from the Hellenists and which best displays their artistic aspirations — elegy.

1. ELEGY

At the time of its origin, in the seventh century, in Ionia, the elegy was the medium for didactic speech at banquets; in this form every sentiment was expressed which in those days might stir the hearts of the assemblage — exhortations to endurance in battle and strife, pictures from military life, glorification of ancestral achievements, praise of love and enjoyment of life; but the elegy might also express the justification of the political lifework of a Solon and the bold thoughts of a Xenophanes concerning gods and men. This partially didactic elegy, in which the personal experience of the poet yields first place to the proclamation of a conception formed by a class or an individual of the universe, was gradually losing its ground in the fifth century; the Athenian

oligarch Critias was one of the last to cultivate it. As the fifth century was giving way to the fourth, an Ionian, Antimachus of Colophon, produced something new in the field of the elegy. To console himself for the loss of his love (Lyde, a non-Hellenic slave girl) he composed a collection of elegies entitled *Lyde*, in which he sang of the unhappy amours of the heroic age. Here we no longer have a short poem on a single subject, as were the older elegies, but a bulky work in several books, treating a rich store of legend — in effect, epic material in elegiac form. On account of the erudition with which the abundance of recondite myths was compiled, and the art with which they were woven together, as well as the use of rare and archaic words, this poem, of which we possess only slight fragments, made a very strong impression upon the Hellenists. The excellent epigrammatist, Asclepiades of Samos, celebrated Lyde in the following verses:

I Lyde am, in name and race, and more respect I claim,
From Codrus to Antimachus, than e'er to woman came.
What man who has not read of me? who has not Lyde sung?
The Muses and Antimachus — from both my music sprung.
— R. G. MacGregor

The formal art of Antimachus did not, indeed, satisfy the requirements of the finest Alexandrian of them all, Callimachus, who rejected *Lyde* as "a ponderous and unpolished work." But upon the oldest Hellenists *Lyde* exerted a con-

siderable influence. Philetas of Cos, the tutor of Ptolemy Philadelphus, who may be considered the real founder of the Hellenistic school of poetry — Theocritus (17.40) mentioned him with the greatest respect, and the Roman poets, Propertius and Ovid, extolled him — glorified his beloved, Bittis, in a work which Ovid classes with the *Lyde* of Antimachus and which was thus obviously akin to it. His example was followed by a pupil of Philetas, Hermesianax of Colophon, of whose *Leontion,* an elegiac work of three books, we possess a continuous piece of about a hundred lines. In this fragment the love sorrows of poets are treated and the two mythical singers, Orpheus and Musaeus, open the poem; there follow in pairs two epic poets, Hesiod and Homer; two elegiac poets, Mimnermus and Antimachus; two lyric poets, Alcaeus and Anacreon; two tragedians, Sophocles and Euripides; and, as the last pair, Philoxenus, a dithyrambic poet of the fifth and fourth centuries, and Philetas of Cos, of whom this is said:

Nor is Philetas' name to thee unknown,
    Than whom a sweeter minstrel never was;
Whose statue lives in his own native town,
    Hallow'd to fame, and breathes in deathless brass,

Under a platane, — seeming still to praise
    The nimble Bittis, in the Coan grove,
With am'rous ditties, and harmonious lays,
    And all the art, and all the warmth of love.

— Jacob Bailey

The love sorrows of three philosophers — Pythagoras, Socrates and Aristippus — are then appended to those of the poets. The poem is far from pleasing. Labored erudition goes hand in hand with bold inventiveness: thus Homer becomes the lover of Penelope; Hesiod finds a mistress, Eoia — a name taken from a poem attributed to him; Alcaeus and Anacreon are rivals for the love of Sappho, though Anacreon was her junior by about fifty years; and, finally, Socrates is the lover of Aspasia. If these violations of historical fact are meant to be comical, the humorous element is not made evident. The narrative, moreover, wherever narrative is attempted, is dry and lifeless, and the diction is frequently obscure and affected. One might assume that Philetas' *Bittis* was more highly thought of than the *Leontion* of his pupil, but very likely even Philetas' bookish archaisms would annoy us.

A longer fragment from the *Erotes* of Phanocles gives us a much more favorable conception of the narrative elegy of the older Hellenists. This poem was an elegiac counterpart to Hesiod's catalogue of beloved heroines, but the Alexandrian poet treats of love among men. I will quote the story of Orpheus, which has been preserved to us:

> Or how once on a time Oeagrus' son,
> The Thracian Orpheus, loved with all his heart
> Calais, son of Boreas; and oft
> In shady groves sat singing out his love,
> Nor found tranquillity to ease his yearning;

But ever sleepless cares within his soul
Wore him away, the while he looked upon
The blooming countenance of Calais.
Him then Bistonian women crowding round
In foul devices with sharp-whetted swords
Most basely slew, because he first had shown
Among the Thracian folk that love for men
That feels no passion for the weaker sex.
His head with bronze they severed; straightway then
Into the Thracian Sea they cast it, nailed
Upon his lyre, that both upon the waves
Might float away, drenched with the cold grey surge.
The hoary sea cast them on Lesbos' isle.
Then resonance as from a clear-toned lyre
Filled all the islands and the sea-washed shores,
As men gave funeral rites to Orpheus' head,
And laid within a tomb the sweet-voiced lyre
That once beguiled even the voiceless rocks,
Aye, and the hateful waves of Phorcus' realm.
Since when that island, tunefullest of all,
Resounds with passionate harping and with song.
But when the warlike Thracians learned this deed
Of savagery, by women wrought, and grief
Possessed their hearts, they branded all their wives,
That these, disfigured with unseemly marks,
Might ne'er forget their hateful deed of blood.
And thus to murdered Orpheus even now
The women pay the penalty of their sin.

— E. D. Perry

Here we have vivid and charming narrative, clear language, discreet sentiment, and an interest in the origin of

foreign customs which reminds us of Callimachus, who perfected the Hellenistic elegy. 23269

Callimachus is the most significant and the most fascinating personality among the Alexandrian poets. He therefore deserves a detailed treatment.

Of his life we know, unfortunately, very little. He was born not much before 330 in the old Graeco-African city, Cyrene, which belonged after 322, with short intermissions, to the empire of the Ptolemies. His father bore the same name as the mythical founder of the city, Battus. From Battus the poet claimed descent; he therefore belonged to the old nobility of Cyrene. His grandfather, also named Callimachus, had occupied an eminent position in his native community. So the poet himself, as an old man,[3] tells us in an imaginary epitaph for his father:

Whoever near this peaceful tomb art passing, Stranger! see
Callimachus's son and sire, Cyrene-born in me.
Both you may know. Her general, one led his country's host,
One sang what even Envy own'd superior. For such boast
There is no Nemesis: whom once the Muses with kind eye
Greet as their friend they ne'er discard when hoary hairs are nigh.

— R. G. MacGregor

In the ever recurring civil wars of Cyrene the family seems to have become impoverished. This appears from the

[3] As this book was in progress there appeared a discussion of a recently discovered poem which Callimachus composed as an old man. See Rudolf Pfeiffer, *Ein Neues Altersgedicht des Kallimachus* (*Hermes*, LXIII [1928], 302–341). — Translators.

fact that Callimachus, after a sojourn at Athens as student, lived for some time apparently in needy circumstances as a teacher of an elementary school in Eleusis, a suburb of Alexandria.

To this period, probably, we owe the majority of his charming epigrams, in which he occasionally complains of poverty, as, e.g., in the bitter lines:

I know my hands are bare of gold;
For Heaven's sake, my dear,
Chant not the too familiar tale [4]
For ever in my ear.

I'm sick at heart when all day long
I hear the bitter jest;
Of all thy qualities, my love,
This is unloveliest.

— Walter Leaf [5]

But greater poetic works also belong to the period during which for a paltry remuneration he taught reading and writing to the children of the suburb. A recently found papyrus presents us with hardly intelligible scraps of an elegy celebrating the athletic victories won at the games by a certain Sosibius, son of Dioscorides, who played a part at the inauguration of the cult of Serapis. The poem must be

[4] Literally and proverbially, "don't tell me my own dream," i.e., what I myself know best; therefore here, 'I, too, am poor.' Cicero in a letter to Atticus uses this proverb, in a Greek form.

[5] From *Little Poems from the Greek*, by Walter Leaf. Reprinted by permission of The Richards Press, Ltd.

dated before 280. Its noteworthy feature is that Callimachus dared to clothe such a poem in the form of an elegy; during the classical period, Pindar and Bacchylides composed epinician odes in the pretentious strophes of choral lyric. Callimachus' epinicion is intended not to be sung but to be recited; with the Alexandrians we find again and again verses intended for song replaced by verses intended for speech, since all their poetry was then meant to be recited. About 280 also was composed the first of the six extant hymns of Callimachus, namely the *Hymn to Zeus*. These hymns again, unlike the older cult-songs, were intended not for choral singing but for recitation; for this reason they were composed in epic hexameters, except the fifth hymn, which is written in elegiac distichs. That the *Hymn to Zeus* was not destined to be delivered at a festival in honor of the gods as a ceremonial act its opening lines immediately and clearly reveal:

> At Jove's high festival, what song of praise
> Shall we his suppliant adorers sing?
> To whom may we our pæans rather raise
> Than to himself, the great Eternal King,
> Who by his nod subdues each earth-born thing;
> Whose mighty laws the gods themselves obey?
> But whether Crete first saw the Father spring,
> Or on Lycæus's mount he burst on day,
> My soul is much in doubt, for both that praise essay.
>
> Some say that thou, O Jove, first saw the morn
> On Cretan Ida's sacred mountain-side;

Others that thou in Arcady wert born:
Declare, Almighty Father — which have lied?
Cretans were liars ever: in their pride
Have they built up a sepulchre for thee;
As if the King of Gods and men had died,
And borne the lot of frail mortality.
No! thou hast ever been, and art, and aye shalt be.
— Fitzjames T. Price

Every Greek drinking bout commenced with a libation to Zeus. The poem is therefore intended for delivery at a symposium, and, indeed, for an educated and intellectual circle, which would be in a position to appreciate the combination of mythographical erudition, apparent naïveté and gentle irony. None of the circle, of course, believed in the gods of the people. Zeus, conceived in Stoic fashion as the embodiment of a cosmic order, may have excited religious emotion; such a feeling is echoed in the third, fourth and fifth verses. But an euhemeristic Zeus, who was born and fought battles and whose tomb, even, is shown, is for the educated purely a creation of poetic fancy, in which people are interested only for the sake of the older poets. Now, Hesiod represents Zeus as born in Crete, and this was the prevailing tradition; when, therefore, Callimachus declares that he harbors serious doubts concerning the god's birthplace and then decides in favor of Arcadia, he both surprises and charms his audience by such a turn. The decision is wittily based on the declaration of a Cretan, the mythical

seer Epimenides, whose verse, " The Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, idle bellies," is quoted by the Apostle Paul in his Epistle to Titus; still more facetious is the candor with which father Zeus himself is first asked to reveal which of the two parties in question falsified. Then a confirmation of his immortality is granted to the god, whence it must needs follow that the tomb of Zeus, shown by the Cretans, is fraudulent. Thus one sees that the religious spirit is utterly absent from this hymn; it is, to use Lessing's expression, a product of wit but not of feeling.

The poets and their audiences were interested, to be sure, in the naïveté of the myths current among the people, but they hardly felt the devotion with which our own romanticists steeped themselves in folk-belief. Theirs was rather an aesthetic joy in the colorful profusion of lively forms. No translation can render the chief charm which the poem had for its audience, namely the perfection of its metrical form. By a whole series of carefully contrived rules, adopted more or less by all contemporary poets, Callimachus bestowed upon epic verse a refinement, suppleness and sonority hitherto unknown. As compared with the Hellenistic verses, Homer's efforts impress one as almost devoid of art; judged by Alexandrian standards, the very first verse of the *Iliad* contains no fewer than three mistakes!

But let us return to the *Hymn to Zeus*. The poet first follows the established custom of hymns to gods in relating Zeus's birth in Arcadia; he summons to his aid a rich store

of geographic names which, indeed, must not be examined as to their correct application. He then reports how the divine babe was conveyed to Crete and was suckled on the hills of Ida by the she-goat Amaltheia and how the Curetes drowned the infant's cries with their noisy dances and thus protected him from the snares of his father, Cronus. Now, in accordance with the prevailing usage, the deeds of the gods should have followed, the tale of the downfall of his father, Cronus, and of his allies, the Titans, the combat with Typhon and the Giants. But of all this we hear nothing. The poet continues:

Fair was the promise of thy childhood's prime,
Almighty Jove! and fairly wert thou reared:
Swift was thy march to manhood: ere thy time
Thy chin was covered by the manly beard;
Though young in age, yet wert thou so revered
For deeds of prowess prematurely done,
That of thy peers or elders none appeared
To claim his birthright; — heaven was all thine own,
Nor dared fell Envy point her arrows at thy throne.

Poets of old do sometimes lack of truth;
For Saturn's ancient kingdom, as they tell,
Into three parts was split, as if forsooth
There were a doubtful choice 'twixt Heaven and Hell
To one not fairly mad; — we know right well
That lots are cast for more equality;
But these against proportion so rebel
That naught can equal her discrepancy;
If one must lie at all — a lie like truth for me!

No chance gave thee the sovranty of heaven;
But to the deeds thy good right hand had done,
And thine own strength and courage, was it given; [6]
These placed thee first, still keep thee on thy throne.
— Fitzjames T. Price

Why does the poet here suddenly and peremptorily brush aside Homer's story that Zeus, Poseidon and Hades, the three sons of Cronus, divided by lot heaven, sea and lower world? Why is the whole matter treated so broadly? Because the poet intends to proceed from the king of the gods to the earthly king, Ptolemy Philadelphus. Like Zeus, Ptolemy was not the eldest son of his father, and it is a fine compliment to the king that the older sons of Cronus recognized of their own accord the supremacy of the youngest brother — a free invention on the part of Callimachus. The suggestion is that the elder son of Ptolemy Soter should have acted similarly, something he had in fact failed to do. More and more clearly the poem points to the earthly king. Of mankind, only kings were the especial care of Zeus; lesser persons were assigned to minor divinities: the artisans to Hephaestus, the warriors to Ares, the hunters to Artemis, the singers to Phoebus. Under Zeus's guidance kings rule over nations; upon them he bestowed wealth and power — but not in equal measure upon all; upon Ptolemy in particular

[6] Might and Power personified are in Hesiod attendants of Zeus's throne. The Greeks never lost their ability to conceive of every abstract idea as a divine being, a fact which often seems puzzling to us moderns.

abundance. And now comes the surprising conclusion, which is related in form to the ancient hymns of the rhapsodes and clearly indicates what Callimachus and his colleagues needed:

> All hail, Almighty Jove! who givest to men
> All good, and wardest off each evil thing.
> Oh, who can hymn thy praise? he hath not been,
> Nor shall he be, that poet who may sing
> In fitting strain thy praises — Father, King,
> All hail! thrice hail! we pray to thee, dispense
> Virtue and wealth to us, wealth varying —
> For virtue's naught, mere virtue's no defense;
> Then send us virtue hand in hand with competence.
> — Fitzjames T. Price

The earthly counterpart of the king of heaven understood how to appreciate this poem, a masterpiece of its kind, better than modern classical scholars, who for centuries deemed this esthetic titbit unpalatable. Ptolemy commissioned Callimachus to catalogue the library and thereby gave him a distinguished and secure position.

About ten years later than the *Hymn to Zeus* is the song in commemoration of the death of Queen Arsinoë, sister and wife of Philadelphus (July, 270). Of this song we have remains in a Berlin papyrus. This poem shows a style quite different from that of the hymn. Even the meter is very peculiar. It consists of anapaestic verses with iambic endings, and a caesura observed as a rule after the third anapaest

produces a certain passionately emotional effect. The language has a Doric coloring; short and almost abrupt sentences indicate the stormy agitation. There is no trace of the waggish and easy-going conversational tone, of the droll irony of the hymn; everything is serious and there is genuine pathos.

After a short invocation of the god, without whom the poet is unable to fulfill his task, he immediately plunges *in medias res*. The soul of the deified queen has already passed the moon and has ascended into the sphere of unchanging constellations, when a pitiful cry resounds: "Our queen is gone!" What follows is hopelessly mutilated, but then comes a magnificent scene. Philotera, a sister of Arsinoë, who died a maiden, and who was likewise deified, happens to be setting out from Henna in Sicily, where she dwelt in the retinue of Demeter, to Lemnos, the seat of Hephaestus and his spouse, Charis. Across the sea she espies the dusky clouds of the funeral pyre or of the sacrifices offered to the dead. Full of anxiety she beseeches Charis to take her stand on Athos, the highest mountain of the Thracian sea, and to discover what these volumes of smoke may mean. Charis soon reports that "the smoke comes from Libya, from thine own city; a great misfortune must have befallen. Indeed, it is not as if the lighthouse of Pharus (the mechanical wonder of the age) were wrapped in flames; but the entire folk weep and wail, they bewail the loss of thy sister. The cities of the land have arrayed them in mourning." Here the

papyrus breaks off. This certainly is courtly poetry and courtly mourning. But the feeling is not a pretense, for the death of the exceptionally clever and energetic queen must have been felt as a serious misfortune, especially in the circle of Callimachus. Further, the elaborate apparatus of gods and goddesses, the mighty picture of the clouds of smoke which drift from Egypt over the Thracian sea, the lookout from the lofty watchtower of Athos are all features that are still fresh and not outworn. We have here true baroque style, the conscious exaggeration of all forms and all feelings into colossal and gigantic proportions — a tendency with which we have long been acquainted in the plastic art of this period. The effects of baroque art are, always, gradually blunted because one artist tries to outdo the other and in the course of time mighty means are employed for petty themes. But as long as baroque art is fresh, its effect is indisputably strong.

That Callimachus pursues in this poem a course so different from that of the *Hymn to Zeus* must not be interpreted as desertion of his artistic principles. The bold impetus of the baroque style and the ingenious conversational tone with its popular touches were alike new; they were alike remote from the beaten track of an aging classicism. It was such novelty that was our poet's chief concern. Nothing is so objectionable to him as the faded and outworn. This sentiment he expressed most clearly in an epigram which is hardly translatable:

I detest the cyclic [7] poem, I delight not in the way
That carries hither, thither all the traffic of the day;
I loathe a hackneyed beauty, and never will I drink
At the public drinking-fount; from all banality I shrink.[8]
— Walter Leaf [9]

To a somewhat earlier date appears to belong the most voluminous accomplishment of the poet, on which his renown with posterity chiefly rests — the four books of *Aitia* (Origins). In this work, also composed in elegiac distichs, he treats the origins of all possible festivals, games, ceremonial usages, customs, also the foundations of cities and sanctuaries. It was a selected array of legends and myths, for the most part very remote, which the poet made with great erudition and then presented in an attractive poetical form. The subject matter belonged in great measure to the province which we nowadays call folklore; precisely what was obscure, untouched and neglected had the greatest attraction for Callimachus.

Famous in antiquity was the prooemium, which the Roman poets Ennius and Propertius imitated. In a dream the poet envisions himself translated to Helicon, Hesiod's mount of the Muses; the Muses give him a draught from the

[7] Professor Körte translates "cyclic" by "trivial."

[8] There follows another distich which bears upon a handsome boy. Professor Körte does not translate it, because, as he asserts, the plays upon words and sounds make a German rendering impossible.

[9] From *Little Poems from the Greek*, by Walter Leaf. Reprinted by permission of The Richards Press, Ltd.

spring Hippocrene and prescribe his theme. In the extant epilogue to the entire poem he makes Zeus grant him definite assurance that he had successfully followed in the path of Hesiod. This relationship with Hesiod, twice referred to by Callimachus, is surprising; Hesiod is an epic poet, while in the *Aitia* we have elegiac verse. It is plainly seen that the verse form is of little consequence to the Alexandrian; he can narrate an epic theme even in elegiac distichs, just as he employed in the majority of his hymns the hexameter and only once the distich. His selection of Hesiod, not of Homer, for his godfather, so to speak, is to be explained, first, by the fact that Callimachus' choice of theme causes the lack of an unified action; and, secondly, by the oft expressed preference of the Hellenists for the Boeotian poet: his contact with nature and his more prominent personality were especially congenial to them.

For the clear conception which we are able to form at present of Callimachus' narrative manner in the *Aitia* we are again indebted to a series of newly discovered papyri. Of these, two from Oxyrhynchus make the greatest contribution. One papyrus sheet stood apparently at the beginning of a book and neatly shows how the poet, in an easy conversational tone, introduces his theme to the reader. As we know from another source, he spoke of a wealthy merchant, Pollis, an Athenian who settled in Alexandria and who even on the banks of the Nile celebrated Athenian festivals:

Nor did the morn of the Broaching of the Jars pass unheeded, nor that whereon the Pitchers of Orestes bring a white day for slaves. And when he kept the yearly festival of Icarius' child, thy day, Erigone, lady most sorrowful for Attic women, he invited to a banquet his familiars, and among them a stranger who was newly visiting Egypt, whither he had come on some private business. An Ician he was by birth, and I shared one couch with him — not by appointment, but not false is the saw of Homer that God ever brings like to like; for he, too, abhorred the wide-mouthed Thracian draught of wine and liked a little cup. To him I said, as the beaker was going round for the third time, when I had learnt his name and lineage: "Verily this is a true saying, that wine wants not only its portion of water but also its portion of talk. So — for talk is not handed round in ladles, nor shalt thou have to ask for it, looking to the haughty brows of the cup-bearers, on a day when the free man fawns upon the slave — let us, Theogenes, put talk in the cup to mend the tedious draught; and what my heart yearns to hear from thee, do thou tell me in answer to my question. Wherefore is it the tradition of thy country to worship Peleus, king of the Myrmidons? What has Thessaly to do with Icos? And why with a leek and . . . loaf does a girl . . . at the procession in honour of the hero?"

— A. W. Mair [10]

A few similarly mutilated questions follow. Then the deep sigh with which the Ician begins his reply is still distinguishable:

[10] From The Loeb Classical Library, reprinted by permission.

"Thrice blessed, verily thou art happy as few are, if thou hast a life that is ignorant of sea-faring. But my life is more at home among the waves than is the sea-gull."

— A. W. Mair [11]

Here we have an altogether realistic scene from the personal life of the poet. For the knowledge of the cults and ritual usages of the small island Icos which he intends to relate he is not indebted to divine inspiration; he had the cults recounted to him at a banquet, by a merchant of Icos. This banquet, which is surely imaginary, is described with easy-going garrulity and gives the poet an opportunity to insert a few highly erudite remarks about Attic festivals, which, for a modern reader at least, call for commentary.

The first two days of the oldest Attic Dionysus festival, the Anthesteria, were called Pithoigia or the Broaching of Jars, and Choes, Pitchers or Jugs; on these two days the slaves were permitted to carouse and feast with the free men. The aetiological legend connected Orestes with the establishment of the Feast of Pitchers. The Attic king Demophon was supposed to have received Orestes hospitably, although he was still polluted by matricide, and, in order to protect his citizens from pollution, to have ordered, in addition to the closing of the sanctuaries, a pitcher of wine to be set before every Athenian. The next-mentioned festival, that of Erigone, is the Aiora, the Swing Festival. According to the legendary form followed here, Erigone is the daughter of Icarius. To

[11] From The Loeb Classical Library, reprinted by permission.

him Dionysus had given the vine, but Icarius was killed by intoxicated peasants to whom he had offered the first wine. After a long search, his daughter found his body and hanged herself on the tree under which the body lay. Dying she utters a curse, praying that the daughters of the Athenians shall suffer a similar death, and a suicide epidemic breaks out among the Athenian maidens. Thence she receives the appellation, "lady most sorrowful for Attic women." By order of the Delphic god, the Athenians atone for their offense by the introduction of the Swing Festival: on ropes fastened to trees the Athenian maidens swing to and fro in imitation of the corpse of Erigone stirred by the wind, and they accompany their swinging with the chant of a ritual song.

A similar transition to leisurely narrative from terse allusion intelligible only to scholars is found also in the longest papyrus fragment of the *Aitia,* which begins in the midst of the story of Acontius and Cydippe. It is a happy chance that from Ovid's *Heroides* and from the letter of the late, affected epistle-writer Aristaenetus the story of Acontius' love for Cydippe and the saga of the race of the Acontiadae, a distinguished family of Ceos, were already more fully known to us than is any other part of the *Aitia.* The handsome youth Acontius catches sight in the temple of Delian Artemis of the charming Naxian maiden Cydippe and falls madly in love with her. In order to win the maiden of another race he contrives a peculiar expedient: he scratches on a beauti-

ful "Cydonian apple" (i.e., the quince) the words: "I swear by Artemis to marry Acontius." This fruit he let fall in the maiden's path; she took it up and in amazement read the inscribed words. Unsuspectingly she uttered aloud, "I swear by Artemis to marry Acontius," and thus unwittingly and unintentionally bound herself by this oath in the sanctuary of the goddess. She returns to Naxos and conceals the event from her parents. Soon afterwards her father decides to give her in marriage to a Naxian youth; the wedding is being prepared, but on the day of the ceremony the bride falls ill. After her recovery the date for the wedding is set for the second time, but again the maiden is seized by an obstinate fever; the same thing is repeated for the third time. The alarmed father goes to consult the Delphic Apollo, who reveals to him that his daughter is bound by the oath uttered in the sanctuary of Artemis and may marry none other than Acontius of Ceos. Now Acontius is fetched to Naxos; the two lovers celebrate their wedding and become progenitors of a flourishing Cean family. I have set the whole narrative forth in advance because it is quite difficult to follow the thread of this simple tale as related in the account of Callimachus. The extant portion begins with the preparation for the first wedding, namely with the mention of the very strange Naxian nuptial custom, the origin of which is only hinted at:

And already the maid had been bedded with the boy, even as ritual ordered that the bride should sleep her prenuptial

sleep with a male child both whose parents were alive. Yea, for they say that once on a time Hera — thou dog, thou dog, refrain, my shameless soul! thou wouldst sing of that which is not lawful to tell. It is a good thing for thee that thou hast not seen the rites of the dread goddess: else wouldst thou have uttered their story too. Surely much knowledge is a grievous thing for him who controls not his tongue: verily this is a child with a knife.

In the morning the oxen were to tear their hearts in the water, seeing before them the keen blade. But in the afternoon an evil paleness seized her: seized her the disease which we banish to the goats of the wild and which we falsely call the holy disease. And then that ill sickness wasted the girl even to the gates of death. A second time the couches were spread: a second time the maid was sick for seven months with a quartan fever. A third time they bethought them again of marriage: a third time a deadly chill settled on Cydippe. A fourth time her father abode it no more but set off to Delphian Phoebus, who in the night spake and said. " A grievous oath by Artemis thwarts thy child's marriage. For my sister was not vexing Lygdamis, neither in Amyclae's shrine was she weaving rushes, nor in the river Parthenius was she washing her stains after the hunt: nay, she was at home in Delos when thy child sware that she would have Acontius, none other, for her bridegroom. But if thou wilt take me for thy adviser, thou wilt fulfil all the oath of thy daughter even as she announced. For I say that Acontius shall be no mingling of lead with silver, but of electrum with shining gold. Thou, the father of the bride, art sprung from Codrus: the Cean bridegroom springs from the priests of Zeus Aristaeus the Lord of Moisture:

priests whose business it is upon the mountain-tops to assuage stern Maera when she rises and to entreat from Zeus the wind whereby many a quail is entangled in the linen mesh." So spake the god. And her father went back to Naxos and questioned the maiden herself; and she revealed to him the whole matter. And she was well again. For the rest, Acontius, it will be her business to go with thee to her own Dionysias.

So faith was kept with the goddess, and her fellows straightway sang their comrade's marriage hymn, deferred no longer. Then I deem, Acontius, that for that night, wherein thou didst touch her maiden girdle, thou wouldst not have accepted either the ankle of Iphicles who ran upon the corn-ears nor the possession of Midas of Celaenae. And my verdict would be attested by all who are not ignorant of the stern god. And from that marriage a great name was destined to arise. For, O Cean, your clan, the Acontiadae, still dwell, numerous and honoured, at Iulis. And this thy passion we heard from old Xenomedes, who once enshrined all the island in a mythological history. . . .

— A. W. Mair [12]

Here I break off. The story of Acontius and Cydippe comes to an end. But the mention of Xenomedes, a local historian of Ceos of about the Periclean age, affords the poet opportunity to give, in the space of twenty-two lines, a bird's-eye view of the whole earlier history of the island of Ceos, until the establishment of its four cities, just as Xenomedes had composed it. This appended catalogue, which of course is

[12] From The Loeb Classical Library, reprinted by permission.

inserted only to enumerate other Cean *Aitia,* namely the foundation of certain cities, is without poetic charm, and hardly suitable for translation into modern verse if only because of the perplexing abundance of proper names; I count about thirty in these few lines. But what a mass of erudite material is forced into the story of Acontius and Cydippe! We have at the very beginning a mention of the peculiar Naxian custom that the bride must spend her prenuptial night with a boy both of whose parents are alive, and who is therefore especially suitable for ritual purposes. It is not a question of that prenuptial intercourse which Immermann describes in his *Oberhof* as a rustic custom; for the boy is not the bridegroom, but perhaps the human representative of a god to whom, at some early period, the right to the virginity of all maidens of the island was conceded. Such symbolic nuptials with a divinity are not unusual elsewhere in Greek religion; each year at Athens during the Anthesteria, the "king's wife," the Basilinna, was married to Dionysus.[13] The aetiological legend to which Callimachus barely alludes is of much later origin than this ritual custom, which, certainly, is very ancient. We know it from the Homeric scholia, and it has left a trace in the *Iliad* itself: Zeus and Hera were united before the celebration of their sacred marriage.

[13] Another attempt at explanation sees in these feigned nuptials a means of deceiving the evil spirits which are especially dangerous on the wedding night and of diverting their attention from the real nuptial night.

But this is not the only piece of folklore with which the poet regales us. In passing he touches upon a custom of transferring to wild goats the so-called holy disease, i.e., epilepsy, just as Christ banished the spirits of those possessed into Gadarene swine. Again, the prophecy of Apollo affords the poet the opportunity of elucidating the origin of the name Parthenius as "virgin-river"; it bears this name because the maiden goddess Artemis is wont to bathe in its stream after the hunt. The lineage of Acontius is traced to a peculiar cult of Zeus Aristaeus of Ceos, whose priests were obliged to obtain by entreaty the blowing of the Etesian winds in midsummer on the appearance of the Dog Star, to assuage the heat of the dog days, and again in the early spring to pray for the favorable north wind which drives swarms of birds of passage into the nets of the island Greeks. This last feature is especially characteristic of the life of the inhabitants of the Cyclades, and I should not be surprised if even today some saint, instead of Zeus, is asked for favorable weather for quail catching. The very description of Acontius' fortune in love is also embellished with an erudite flourish. That the youth would not have exchanged the possession of his beloved for the gold of Phrygian Midas seems to us so commonplace a figure that one is almost surprised to find it in this connection. But it was only through the Hellenistic poets and particularly Ovid that the story of Midas became so familiar. Even stranger is the other boon for which Acontius would be

unwilling to exchange his bride, namely, the swiftness of foot of Iphicles. Hesiod had told of him who, vying with the winds, ran so swiftly over a grainfield that the ears did not bend under his steps. Only the immense importance which the Greeks attached to all accomplishments relating to sport made it comprehensible that such athletic ability could possibly be mentioned as the equivalent of a bride.

In spite of all its erudition, Callimachus' narrative is by no means dry. Everything he relates presents vivid pictures. The sacrificial oxen doomed to death, which on the festal morning spent the force of their rage in the sea, the suffering maiden, the goddess Artemis weaving rushes on the banks of the Eurotas and washing away the dust of the hunt in the river Parthenius, the priests on the rocky shore with their prayer for help in quail catching, the maidens singing at the marriage ceremony and the bridegroom beaming with happiness we see, every one, clearly, before us. The language too is quite simple and strives for the popular tone by means of such proverbial expressions as "knives are not befitting boys" or "no mingling of lead with silver." In giving the oracle of Apollo the poet succeeded best in reproducing the tone of fable, which makes the great of earth and heaven speak the language of common folk. In his outspoken simplicity this Olympian matchmaker anticipates Tieck's fairy kings. But in fact this popular simplicity is as little sustained by Callimachus as by our own older romanticists, and doubtless he did not aspire to uniformity

of tone any more than they aspired to it. When the poet immediately before a climax of his story sets about giving an explanation of a peculiar ritual custom and then suddenly leaves this explanation to moralize at length on the dangers of garrulity, or when he appends the dry statement that he read all this in Xenomedes to the bright conclusion of the tale, we have conscious violations of atmosphere such as Tieck was so fond of, and which Friedrich Schlegel emphatically praises as an artistic expedient. Callimachus carries this peculiarity furthest in a small Berlin papyrus fragment of the *Aitia*, in which he coolly advises the reader to imagine for himself the further action and thus to reduce the length of the poem. Never to be tedious, never to be commonplace, always to charm and to surprise were obviously the guiding principles to which the poet adhered in the course of composition of his long work. The endless store of scholarly material is articulated and dovetailed with the highest art. The mood is now a leisurely andante, now a headlong presto; at one time the tone has the simplicity of a fairy tale, at another it is ingeniously pointed, and always the clever and smiling face of the poet peeps through the richly variegated array of his characters. In regard both to art of composition and to narrative, Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, alone of ancient works, can be put side by side with the *Aitia*. In the *Metamorphoses*, however, Ovid's personality is by no means as prominent as is that of Callimachus in the *Aitia*. Of modern poems, as von

Wilamowitz has rightly observed, Byron's *Don Juan* shows the closest resemblance.

With the *Aitia* Callimachus intended to terminate his poetic career; to this he gave clear expression at the end of the work. After Zeus has endorsed the Hesiodic character of his work, as we have said, and the god takes leave of him with the friendly wish that he may fare better in life than did the Boeotian poet, Callimachus subjoins these lines:

. . . Hail, greatly hail to thee also, O Zeus! do thou save all the house of our kings! and I will visit the haunt of the Muses on foot.

— A. W. Mair [14]

To understand the last line, we must remember that, both in Greek and in Latin, 'pedestrian language' can signify only prose; [15] and the learned work in the library, to which the poet intended to devote himself entirely, was as much in the service of the Muses as was his poetry.

Callimachus, however, did not live up strictly to the resolution which he had made. It is true that some of his poems, which I have as yet not taken into consideration, e.g., his epyllion *Hecale* (see section 2) and the hymn *The Bath of Pallas,* belong to the period before the conclusion of the *Aitia;* other poems, however, are with probability or even with certainty to be put later.

[14] From The Loeb Classical Library, reprinted by permission.

[15] This interpretation, advocated by v. Wilamowitz, I consider the only possible one; others are of a different opinion.

Among these the book of *Iambi* is very peculiar. The same Oxyrhynchus papyrus which gave us the *Cydippe* contains more than two hundred and fifty verses of the *Iambi*, which, unfortunately, are in many places hopelessly mutilated. Their form is the so-called halting iambic (scazon), a trimeter the last foot of which is inverted, i.e., a trimeter ending in $\cup - - \cup$ instead of in $\cup - \cup -$. This inversion gives the verse a lame, even vulgar effect. Hipponax of Ephesus had introduced this meter into poetry in the sixth century, and it was well suited for his vulgarly realistic, abusive and beggarly poetry. Because he was as unlike as possible an Attic youth such as we find on the Parthenon frieze, this uncouth proletarian aroused great interest among the Alexandrians, and Callimachus adopted not only his meter, which, in fact, he manages more artistically and vigorously than the Ephesian had managed it, but also the Ionic popular dialect. This is not the language which was spoken in the streets of Miletus and Ephesus in the time of Callimachus, but, as we learn from Ionic inscriptions, a dialect which for a long time had been obsolete, a language therefore which the Dorian Callimachus learned out of books. This is not so surprising as may appear to us today, for Greek poetry since Homer had almost always made use of a literary language which was never actually spoken anywhere. The Cyrenean had also to learn the language of his elegies and hymns; though in the fifth and the sixth hymn he gives a Doric tone to the epic dialect, the Doric element is, after

all, but a varnish laid over the epic. At the opening of the *Iambi* he introduces as speaker Hipponax, who comes from Hades, "where they sell an ox for a penny," to tell a story. How far Hipponax is retained as a narrator cannot be exactly determined; he is not retained throughout the whole book, for in a later passage we hear, "This is the tale of Aesop of Sardis, whom, when he sang his story, the Delphians received in no kindly wise." The book has no unity, and one story or tale is quite loosely linked with another. After the story of the golden cup of Bathycles, which was passed from one to another of the Seven Sages because none of them was willing to consider himself the wisest, the tale of the quarrel of the Laurel and the Olive is humorously narrated. It is in good preservation. First the haughty laurel speaks and disdainfully looks down upon the "foolish olive." It boasts of the beauty of its foliage and, above all, of its position in religious worship. Laurel branches decorate every doorpost; every seer and every priest wears them; the Pythia is surrounded with laurel branches; Branchus cleansed the plague-stricken Ionians with laurel and abracadabra. Laurel is used at festive banquets and by the choruses of Apollo, nay, the laurel is made the prize of victory at the Pythian games and is fetched from the Vale of Tempe for this express purpose. The laurel is pure and therefore has naught to do with mourning; the olive, on the other hand, is spread beneath corpses. But the olive is not easily intimidated by the laurel's boast. That

which the laurel cites as a reproach, its use in the service of the dead, constitutes the olive's chief pride. The olive accompanies those gloriously slain in battle, as well as aged women and men on their last journey, and is more desirable for them than is the laurel for those who fetch it from Tempe. Even in the games the olive is more highly esteemed than the laurel, for the former is the prize at Olympian games, the latter only at Delphi — the very birds in the trees have long been twittering of this. Who brought forth the laurel? Earth, sun and rain, just as they created other plants; the olive was created by Athena when she contended with Poseidon. The fact that both are pleasing to the gods the olive does not wish to dispute. But now she plays her trump. The fruits of the laurel are useless, while the fruits of the olive yield a highly esteemed food and furnish delicious oil. Further, suppliants carry olive branches, and the Delians preserve most carefully the olive's stump. The olive remains triumphant!

Even during the olive's speech the birds in the branches were so boisterous that the olive had impatiently to bid them keep silence. The laurel is furious and wants to boast anew; but a bramble bush intercedes and, assuming an air of equality with the nobler trees, urges peace. But this intervention was ill received by the haughty laurel: "Art thou one of us?" says she, and is all the more eager to quarrel.

At this point, the continuity is broken. We have here a genuine example of Ionian story telling — a merry tale with

a didactic touch, such as was told in the market places and palaces of Ionia as far back as the seventh century, and such as may be heard even today in Anatolian bazaars.

It is therefore very remarkable that on the two following, hopelessly mutilated sheets, the poet suddenly turns to questions of poetic technique, mixture of dialects, use of certain meters and limitation to certain classes of poetry — apparently, throughout, in an irate tone. Thus even in the innocent Ionic tales the personality of the poet obtrudes, by way of expressions that have to do with his literary quarrels.

The third and fourth hymns, those to Artemis and to Delos, will be touched upon only briefly; both are rich in original invention and both often treat the gods with as little respect as did the Old Attic Comedy. The opening scene of the Artemis hymn is delightful. The little divine babe sits in the lap of her father, Zeus, and begs him, with a mixture of naïveté and precociousness, to grant her all the gifts which she will later need as an adult goddess:

"O grant me, father," thus the goddess said,
"To reign a virgin, an unspotted maid.
To me let temples rise and altars smoke,
And men by many names my aid invoke;
Proud Phœbus else might with thy daughter vie,
And look on Dian with disdainful eye.
To bend the bow and aim the dart be mine,
I ask no thunder nor thy bolts divine;
At your desire the Cyclops will bestow
My pointed shafts and string my little bow.

Let silver light my virgin steps attend,
When to the chase with flying feet I bend,
Above the knee be my white garments roll'd
In plaited folds, and fring'd around with gold.
Let Ocean give me sixty little maids
To join the dance amid surrounding shades;
Let twenty more from fair Amnisius come,
All nine years old, and yet in infant-bloom,
To bear my buskins, and my dogs to feed,
When fawns in safety frisk along the mead,
Nor yet the spotted lynx is doom'd to bleed.
Be mine the mountains and each rural bower,
And give one city for thy daughter's dower;
On mountain-tops shall my bright arrows shine,
And with the mortal race I'll only join,
When matrons torn by agonizing throes
Invoke Lucina to relieve their woes;
For at my birth the attendant Fates assign'd
This task to me, in mercy to mankind,
Since fair Latona gave me to thy love,
And felt no pangs when blest by favouring Jove."
She spoke, and stretch'd her hands with infant-art,
To stroke his beard, and gain her father's heart;
But oft she rais'd her little arms in vain.
At length with smiles he thus reliev'd her pain.
" Fair daughter, lov'd beyond th' immortal race,
If such as you spring from a stol'n embrace,
Let furious Juno burn with jealous ire,
Be mine the care to grant your full desire,
And greater gifts beside . . ."

— H. W. Tytler

In this graceful nursery scene the request of the little maid for eternal maidenhood and for sixty daughters of Oceanus, who should be unmarried though already nine years of age, approaches travesty [16] very closely. Father Zeus resembles the Raphaelite portrait in which he is represented as pinching the cheek of Ganymede. The poet almost oversteps the bounds of good taste in describing the wild Cyclops smiths, of whom all divine children are in dread: when they are naughty, their mothers quickly call for Arges and Steropes; in the place of these, Hermes blackened with soot comes out from his corner and the divine children cry and hide their heads in their mothers' robes. And yet the charm of this hymn rests entirely on the genre scenes, freely invented, and not on the scholarly catalogue of all the mountains, islands and cities where the Artemis cult flourished, which forms the conclusion of the poem.

In the *Hymn to Delos*, Callimachus enters into a dangerous competition with the first Homeric Hymn; but his poem contains such a rich flood of new ideas that, so far as his contemporaries were concerned, he no doubt forced the older poem into the background.

Among other things, the Celtic invasions and their menace

[16] Professor Körte in the first line of his translation gives, "papa," not father. He says: "I remark explicitly that the word in the Greek original corresponds to a pet word of children's speech."

to the Delphic sanctuary in 279 are effectively depicted in this poem. The poet knew these dangerous barbarians from personal observation. Ptolemy had procured a detached band of Celts to serve him as mercenaries and, finding that they proved insubordinate, he had them destroyed by fire on a small island in the Sebennytic mouth of the Nile. Callimachus describes " the Titans of a later day " and their strange weapons with a mixture of horror and admiration, just as do the Pergamene sculptors in their masterly statues of the Celts. It was on account of this Celtic adventure in Egypt that Callimachus admitted the Celts into his poem. To be able to do so, he resorts to a rococo contrivance: while the pregnant Leto seeks in vain for a place to bear her divine progeny — out of fear of the anger of jealous Juno all countries, cities and islands refuse to receive her — Apollo, yet unborn, utters from his mother's womb quite a long prophecy; he does not want to be born in Cos, because another god is destined to be born there in the future (King Ptolemy Philadelphus), with whom, in days to come, he will make common cause against the Celts, he himself at Delphi, Ptolemy on the Nile. For this reason Leto is bidden to go to the floating island of Delos and to give birth to him there! And this is not the first but the second prophecy of the unborn; he had already threatened Thebes, where in days to come he was to inflict destruction upon the offspring of Niobe.

Some twenty years after the completion of the *Aitia*,

Callimachus composed the second hymn, that to Apollo, his only hymn with a political background.[17]

Already Ptolemy I had appointed his stepson Magas viceroy of Cyrene. Magas later (about 274) rebelled against his stepbrother, Ptolemy Philadelphus, invaded Egypt, and achieved full independence, although the formal suzerainty of Ptolemy was preserved. To secure the restoration of Cyrene, at least after Magas' death, Philadelphus betrothed his son and heir apparent, the later Euergetes, to Magas' only daughter, Berenice. But when Magas died (about 250), his widow, Apame, a daughter of the Syrian king Antiochus, wished to dissolve the arrangement; she offered the hand of Berenice and with it the throne of Cyrene to a Macedonian prince, the young and handsome Demetrius. He promptly came to Cyrene and assumed the kingship; he appeared even more desirable to his mother-in-law, however, than to his bride. The very youthful princess became the head of a court conspiracy; Demetrius was slain in the bedroom of the dowager queen; the latter, however, was spared. Thereupon Berenice consummated her marriage to the Egyptian heir apparent, Euergetes, and shortly thereafter (246) ascended the throne of Egypt. Callimachus' *Hymn to Apollo* belongs, therefore, to the period between Magas' death and Berenice's marriage with Euergetes. The poet relates in detail the colonization of the country and the

[17] In the interpretation of this much discussed poem I am in full agreement with v. Wilamowitz.

foundation of the city of Cyrene by the Greeks, and states emphatically that Apollo, the protector of the Greek colony, had solemnly promised to give it to "our kings," and Apollo is wont always to keep his promise. The hymn is, therefore, at the same time a poetic manifesto against the threatened defection of Cyrene from the empire of the Ptolemies. The personality of the poet stands out in incomparably bolder relief in the *Hymn to Apollo* than in the older hymns; in this respect a resemblance to the choral odes of Pindar is noticeable. In the *Bath of Pallas* Callimachus had already attempted to make his audience share in the emotions of those participating fully in a lengthy ritual, and in the present poem he resumes this manner of representation. At the beginning of the hymn we stand with the poet amid the crowd of worshipers in front of the temple and experience the expectant awe which precedes the appearance of the god. I quote the first few lines:

What force, what sudden impulse, thus can make
The laurel-branch, and all the temple shake!
Depart, ye souls profane; hence, hence! O fly
Far from this holy place! Apollo's nigh;
He knocks with gentle foot; the Delian palm
Submissive bends, and breathes a sweeter balm:
Soft swans, high hovering, catch th' auspicious sign,
Wave their white wings, and pour their notes divine.
Ye bolts, fly back; ye brazen doors, expand,
Leap from your hinges, Phœbus is at hand.

Begin, young men, begin the sacred song,
Wake all your lyres, and to the dances throng . . .
— H. W. Tytler

But the epiphany of the god which we are led by the thrilling proclamation to expect does not take place. In the following verses, which render praise to the god, we sometimes think that the chorus is singing, but then again the poet bids the ritual cry to be uttered and speaks of the chorus in the third person. From the glorification of Apollo's varied manifestations of power uninterrupted by any interposition of genre-like or even parodic features there gradually develops the story of Cyrene's foundation under Apollo's guidance. And here again verses are found which could only have been spoken by the poet, not by the chorus:

To tuneful Phœbus, sacred god of song,
In various nations, various names belong;
Some Boëdromius, Clarius some implore,
But nam'd Carneüs on my native shore.
— H. W. Tytler

The Dorian god, Apollo Carneius, is the true racial god for the Cyrenean Callimachus, but not for the Alexandrian chorus. What is more, the poet does not want us to distinguish sharply his own utterances from those of the chorus; he would have us feel with him the mood of Apollo's festival. This mood is genuine, even if its true source be love of his native country rather than faith in the gods. The slaying

of the Pythian dragon, which in other ceremonial songs in honor of Apollo forms the central theme, constitutes in this affectionate account of Cyrene an incidental appendix, as it were; the conclusion, however, shows a surprisingly personal touch:

An equal foe, pale Envy, late drew near,
And thus suggested in Apollo's ear:
" I hate the bard who pours not forth his song
In swelling numbers, loud, sublime, and strong;
No lofty lay should in low murmurs glide,
But wild as waves, and sounding as the tide."
Fierce with his foot indignant Phœbus spurn'd
Th' invidious monster, and in wrath return'd.
Wide rolls Euphrates' wave, but soil'd with mud,
And dust and slime pollute the swelling flood:
For Ceres still the fair Melissæ bring
The purest water from the smallest spring,
That softly murmuring creeps along the plain,
And falls with gentle cadence to the main.
Propitious Phœbus! thus thy power extend,
And soon shall Envy to the shades descend.

— H. W. Tytler

Here we are suddenly thrust out of the religious mood and thrown into the midst of the battle waged by Alexandrian poets over the justification for the existence in their age of the heroic epic. Already in antiquity it had been recognized that these lines are a rough rejoinder to the reproach uttered in the circle of Apollonius of Rhodes, that Callimachus rejected heroic epos only because he him-

self lacked power to create one. The fact that Callimachus adds this strange appendage to the hitherto harmonious unity of the *Hymn to Apollo* shows clearly enough that this disruption of harmony affords him conscious pleasure, quite in the spirit of Friedrich Schlegel. The quarrel with Apollonius was probably the cause of a smaller, apparently far from pleasing poem, the *Ibis*. With reference to Callimachus, Ovid composed an elegiac poem of six hundred and forty-four verses under the same name, in which he curses an unnamed enemy, quoting a large number of purposely veiled stories of divine punishments and misfortunes. Ovid's *Ibis* is not, as was formerly believed, a free adaptation of Callimachus' poem. Of the latter we know only that it was substantially shorter, but similar to Ovid's in construction; not even the meter is certain. I maintain that Callimachus' poem bears a relationship to Apollonius Rhodius, in spite of recent doubts on the subject. I mention this work, although for us it is only a phantom, because of the considerable influence it exerted upon later poets (see p. 166).

The sixth hymn, to Demeter, is closely related to the *Hymn to Apollo* in mood, style of narrative, and verse technique; the two hymns cannot be far apart in time of composition.[18] I give a short introduction. Again we witness a

[18] Professor Körte illustrates this hymn by the masterly translation of v. Wilamowitz, who, in accordance with his principles of translation, tries to achieve the effect of Callimachus' hexameters by another meter, namely the catalectic tetrameter. See Ulrich v. Wilamowitz-Möllendorff, *Reden und Vorträge* [3], 1913, p. 275.

great ritual celebration, the Procession of the Sacred Basket of Demeter, in Alexandria. We are among women standing along the street, who, excited and exhausted by fasting, eagerly await the approach of the procession and the appearance of the evening star which is to put an end to their fast. To shorten the hours of waiting, the women chat about the sufferings and might of the goddess. From this conversation there develops the long burlesque, yet gruesome, legend of Erysichthon, who was punished with a voracious and unquenchable appetite — a legend which occupies the larger part of the hymn. This gruesome example of the great goddess's power is related quite in the popular tone. To be sure, the waggish poet applies his colors so generously that what seemed ghastly to the pious appeared facetious to his readers; the worst part, the death by starvation, he suppresses. But this legend is kept within the frame of the ceremonial rite; the procession draws near and the women join it. The poet himself withdraws to the background and the final prayer is also in perfect accord with the harmony of the whole.

The basket swift-descending from the skies,
Thus, thus, ye matrons, let your voices rise:
"Hail! Ceres, hail! by thee, from fertile ground
Swift springs the corn, and plenty flows around."
Ye crowds, yet uninstructed, stand aloof,
Nor view the pageant from the lofty roof,
But on the ground below; nor matrons fair,

Nor youth, nor virgins, with dishevell'd hair,
Dares here approach: nor let the moisture flow
From fasting mouths to stain the mystic show.
But radiant Hesper from the starry skies
Beholds the sacred basket as it flies:
Bright Hesper only could persuade the power
To quench her thirst, in that unhappy hour,
When full of grief she roam'd from place to place,
Her ravish'd daughter's latent steps to trace.
How could thy tender feet, O goddess, bear
The painful journey to the western sphere?
How couldst thou tread black Æthiop's burning climes,
Or that fair soil, in these distressful times,
Where, on the tree, the golden apple beams,
Nor eat, nor drink, nor bathe in cooling streams?
Thrice Achelous' flood her steps divide,
And every stream that rolls a ceaseless tide.
Three times she press'd the centre of that isle,
Where Enna's flowery fields with beauty smile.
Three times, by dark Callichorus, she sat,
And call'd the yawning gulf to mourn her fate:
There, faint with hunger, laid her wearied limbs,
Nor eat, nor drank, nor bath'd in cooling streams.
But cease, my Muse, in these unhallow'd strains,
To sing of Ceres' woes, and Ceres' pains;
Far nobler to resound her sacred laws,
That bless'd mankind, and gain'd their loud applause.
Far nobler to declare how first she bound
The sacred sheaves, and cut the corn around,
How first the grain beneath the steer she laid,
And taught Triptolemus the rural trade.

Far nobler theme (that all his crime may shun)
To paint the woes of Triopas' proud son;
How meagre famine o'er his visage spread,
When her fierce vengeance on his vitals fed.
Not yet to Cnidia the Pelasgi came,
But rais'd at Dotium to bright Ceres' name
A sacred wood, whose branches interwove
So thick, an arrow scarce could pierce the grove.
Here pines and elms luxuriant summits rear;
Here shone bright apples, there the verdant pear:
A crystal fountain pour'd his streams around,
And fed the trees, and water'd all the ground.
With wonder Ceres saw the rising wood,
The spreading branches, and the silver flood,
Which, more than green Triopium, gain'd her love,
Than fair Eleusis, or bright Enna's grove.
But when, incens'd, his better genius fled
From Erysichthon, rash designs invade
His impious breast: he rush'd along the plain
With twenty strong attendants in his train,
Of more than mortal size, and such their power,
As could with ease o'erturn the strongest tower.
With saws and axes arm'd they madly stood,
And forc'd a passage through the sacred flood.
A mighty poplar rais'd his head on high
Far o'er the rest, and seem'd to touch the sky
(The nymphs at mid-day sported in the shade).
Here first they struck: on earth the tree was laid,
And told the rest her fate in doleful moans;
Indignant Ceres heard the poplar's groans,
And thus with anger spoke: "What impious hand

Has cut my trees, and my bright grove profan'd? "
She said, and instant, like Nicippa, rose,
Her well-known priestess, whom the city chose;
Her holy hands the crowns and poppy bore;
And from her shoulder hung the key before.
She came where Erysichthon's rage began,
And mildly thus address'd the wretched man.
" My son, whoe'er thou art that wounds the trees,
My son, desist, nor break high heaven's decrees:
By thy dear parent's love, recall thy train,
Retire, my son, nor let me plead in vain:
Lest Ceres' wrath come bursting from above,
In vengeance for her violated grove."
She said: but scornful Erysichthon burn'd
With fiercer rage, and fiercer frowns return'd,
Than the gaunt lioness (whose eyes they say
Flash keener flames than all the beasts of prey)
Casts on some hunter, when, with anguish torn,
On Tmarus' hills her savage young are born.
" Hence, hence," he cried, " lest thy weak body feel
The fatal force of my resistless steel:
Above my dome the lofty trees shall shine,
Where my companions the full banquet join,
And sport and revel o'er the sparkling wine."
He said. Fell Nemesis the speech records,
And vengeful Ceres heard th' insulting words;
Her anger burn'd: her power she straight assum'd,
And all the goddess in full beauty bloom'd:
While to the skies her sacred head arose,
She trod the ground, and rush'd amidst her foes.
The giant-woodmen, struck with deadly fear,

That instant saw, that instant disappear,
And left their axes in the groaning trees:
But unconcern'd their headlong flight she sees;
For these t' obey their lord the fences broke,
To whom with dreadful voice the goddess spoke.
"Hence, hence, thou dog, and hasten to thy home;
There shape the trees, and roof the lofty dome:
There shalt thou soon unceasing banquets join,
And glut thy soul with feasts and sparkling wine."
Her fatal words inflam'd his impious breast;
He rag'd with hunger like a mountain-beast:
Voracious famine his shrunk entrails tore,
Devouring still, and still desiring more.
Unhappy wretch! full twenty slaves of thine
Must serve the feast, and twelve prepare the wine;
Bright Ceres' vengeance and stern Bacchus' rage
Consum'd the man who durst their power engage:
For these combine against insulting foes,
And fill their hearts with anguish and with woes.
His pious parents still excuses found
To keep their son from banquets given around.
And when th' Ormenides his presence call
To Pallas' games, by sacred Iton's wall,
Th' impatient mother still their suit denied.
"The last revolving day," she swift replied,
"To Cranon's town he went, and there receives
An annual tribute of a hundred beaves."
Polyxo comes, the son and sire invites,
To grace her young Actorion's nuptial rites:
But soon the mournful mother thus replies,
With tears of sorrow streaming from her eyes:

" The royal Triopas will join thy feast;
But Erysichthon lies with wounds opprest;
Nine days are past, since, with relentless tooth,
A boar on Pindus gor'd the unhappy youth."
What fond excuses mark'd her tender care!
" Did one the banquet or the feast prepare?
My son is gone from home," the mother cries:
Was he invited to the nuptial ties?
A discus struck him, from his steed he fell,
Or numbers his white flocks in Othrys' dale.
Meanwhile the wretch, confin'd within the rooms,
In never-ending feasts his time consumes,
Which his insatiate maw devour'd as fast,
As down his throat the nourishment he cast;
But unrecruited still with strength or blood,
As if in ocean's gulfs had sunk the food.
As snows from Mima's hills dissolving run,
Or waxen puppets melt before the sun,
So fast his flesh consum'd, his vigour gone,
And nervous fibres only cloth'd the bone.
His mother mourn'd; his sisters groans resum'd;
His nurse and twenty handmaids wept around:
The frantic father rent his hoary hairs,
And vainly thus to Neptune pour'd his prayers:
" O power divine, believ'd my sire in vain;
Since thou reliev'st not thy descendant's pain:
If I from beauteous Canace may claim
My sacred birth, or Neptune's greater name;
Behold a dire disease my son destroy:
O! look with pity on the wretched boy.
Far happier fate, had Phœbus' vengeful dart

Struck, with resistless force, his youthful heart;
For then my hands had funeral honours paid,
And sacred rights to his departed shade.
But haggard famine with pale aspect now
Stares in his eyes, and sits upon his brow.
Avert, O gracious power, the dire disease,
Or feed my wretched son in yonder seas.
No more my hospitable feasts prevail,
My folds are empty, and my cattle fail.
My menial train will scarce the food provide;
The mules no more my rushing chariot guide.
A steer his mother fed within the stall,
At Vesta's sacred altar doom'd to fall,
This he devour'd, and next my warlike horse,
So oft victorious in the dusty course.
Ev'n puss escap'd not, when his fury rose,
Herself so dreadful to domestic foes."

Long as his father's house supplied the feast
Th' attendants only knew the dreadful waste.
But when pale famine fill'd th' imperial dome,
Th' insatiate glutton was expell'd from home,
And, though from kings descended, rueful sat
In public streets, and begg'd at every gate:
Still at the feast his suppliant hands were spread,
And still the wretch on sordid refuse fed.

Immortal Ceres! for thine impious foe
Ne'er let my breast with sacred friendship glow.
Beneath my roof the wretch shall never prove
A neighbour's kindness, or a neighbour's love.
Ye maids and matrons, thus with sacred song,
Salute the pageant as it comes along.

"Hail! Ceres, hail! by thee from fertile ground
Swift springs the corn, and plenty flows around."
As four white coursers to thy hallow'd shrine
The sacred basket bear; so, power divine,
Let Spring and Summer, rob'd in white, appear;
Let fruits in Autumn crown the golden year,
That we may still the sprightly juice consume,
To soothe our cares in Winter's cheerless gloom.
As we, with feet unshod, with hair unbound,
In long procession tread the hallow'd ground;
May thus our lives in safety still be led,
O shower thy blessings on each favour'd head!
As matrons bear the baskets fill'd with gold,
Let boundless wealth in every house be told.
Far as the Prytaneum the power invites
The women uninstructed in the rites;
Then dames of sixty years (a sacred throng)
Shall to the temple lead the pomp along.
Let those who for Lucina's aid extend
Imploring arms, and those in pains attend
Far as their strength permits; to them shall come
Abundant bliss, as if they reach'd the dome.
Hail, sacred power! preserve this happy town
In peace and safety, concord and renown:
Let rich increase o'erspread the yellow plain;
Feed flocks and herds, and fill the ripening grain:
Let wreaths of olive still our brows adorn,
And those who plough'd the field shall reap the corn.
Propitious, hear my prayer, O Queen supreme,
And bless thy poet with immortal fame.

— H. W. Tytler

The last poem of Callimachus, so far as our knowledge goes, is *The Lock of Berenice,* a courtly occasional poem which shows the poet's art at its zenith. In 346 Ptolemy Euergetes ascended the Egyptian throne, together with the young and beautiful queen, Berenice, to whose determined intervention the empire of the Ptolemies owed the recovery of Cyrene.

Immediately upon his ascension the young king set out for Asia to wreak his vengeance upon the Syrian king Seleucus for the murder of his sister. His wife, Berenice, vowed to the gods a lock of her hair for his safe return. After a brilliant and triumphant expedition which brought him farther east than any Ptolemy before him had penetrated, revolts in Egypt induced the king to return; he brought with him rich booty, and the queen fulfilled her solemn vow. But on the next day, to the consternation of all, the royal lock disappeared from the temple. Thereupon the famous court astronomer, Conon, contrived an exquisite means of rendering homage to the adored queen. As he had just discovered a new constellation among the fixed stars in the heavens, he named it the *Lock of Berenice* and invented the myth that the gods themselves had carried off the lock from the temple and placed it in the heavens, just as once upon a time they had vouchsafed eternity to Ariadne's crown in the heavens. Even today the constellation retains this name: it lies between the Great Bear and the Virgin.

This gallant invention of the astronomer, which must certainly have interested the court circles of Alexandria, Callimachus now glorified in a grand elegy. We possess it only in the Latin translation of Catullus, which can hardly be literal, but doubtless faithfully reproduces the poetic style. Recently, mutilated fragments of the original turned up in a papyrus from Oxyrhynchus.[19] In Catullus' poem, which I give in translation, the lock itself is the speaker.

Who first discerned the heavenly lights, the rise
And set of stars, the pageant of the skies,
How wanes the splendour of the striding sun,
How stars set duly, when their course is run,
How from her orbit through the sky sweet love
To Latmos' caves can Trivia remove,
'Twas he, 'twas Conon who me too descried
A lock of Berenice's hair enskied,
A glory, which to many a god in prayer
She vowed, outstretching arms so smooth and fair,
What time the newly-married king arose
To leave his home and clash with Syrian foes.
Is Venus hated by new brides? Or is
It all to cheat fond bridegrooms of their bliss,
The tear-drop in the bower, the wail of woe?
So help me all the gods 'tis idle show.
My queen that lesson taught me on the day
When to grim war her bridegroom went away.

[19] Professor Körte quotes the translation of Professor Ulrich v. Wilamowitz Möllendorf, who elucidated the poem in an especially charming lecture (see *Reden und Vorträge*,[3] p. 243.); this time he has rendered the elegiac distichs by verses arranged in stanzas.

Or will you say you mourned not for your dear,
But for your kinsman's [20] absence shed the tear?
What! when the sorrow pierced your inmost soul!
When every sense was ravished, and your whole
Heart fainted in sore trouble! Yet I knew
No girl so valiant from a child as you.
Have you forgot the gallant deed which won
Your royal wedlock? Braver deed was none.
Then the last parting! All you tried to say!
Dear God! how oft you brushed the tears away!
What Power could change you so? You only prove
That lovers need the presence of their love.
'Twas then for your sweet husband's homecoming
To all the gods you vowed that you would bring
This lock of hair, with blood of bulls. Anon
Asia for Egypt by his arms was won.
Therefore, O queen! in duty bound I pay
Your ancient vow to heav'n's high host to-day.
Unwillingly, my queen, I left you; I
Swear by your life, your head, unwillingly
(And may whoe'er to these makes false appeal
Have due reward) : but who could cope with steel?
Not ev'n the crest of all the crests that on
Earth's shores are traversed by bright Thia's son,
When through mid Athos Persian chivalry
Floated upon their new-created sea.
Shall locks of hair stand fast, when mountains fall?

[20] Euergetes was not the brother but the cousin of Berenice; but the Egyptian custom of marriage between sisters and brothers in the royal family, introduced by Ptolemy Philadelphus, had brought it about that Berenice is, in official records, called sister of Euergetes.

God whelm the Chalybes, whelm one and all,
Him most, who foremost rifled earth, and 'gan
Draw out hard iron bars, the curse of man.
While still the sister locks made moan for me,
Lo! the winged courser of Arsinoe,[21]
Ev'n Ethiopian Memnon's brother dear,
Striking the earth with waving wings drew near:
'Twas he who bore me through the darkling sky,
In Aphrodite's holy lap to lie,
When the Zephyrian queen with this intent,
Greek dweller on Canopus' shores, had sent.
So, on the threshold of the spangled skies
Lest Ariadne's golden crown should rise
And stand alone, that I no less might shine,
Spoil of that sunny head, with light divine,
Me, a new star in heaven, dripping yet
With brine, among old stars the goddess set.
For I beside Lycaon's child, between
The Maiden and the Lion's angry sheen,
Slope to my setting, slow Bootes' guide,
Who long delays to dip in Ocean's tide.
But though the gods by night beside me pace,
Though at the dawn I see white Tethys' face,
(Maiden of Rhamnus, suffer me to say
The word no craven fear shall hide to-day,
Though angry stars should scold and rend me, lest
The secret of my soul should be confessed)

[21] Arsinoë, the deified spouse of Philadelphus, was worshiped under the attributes of Arsinoë-Aphrodite-Zephyritis in a sanctuary erected on the promontory of Zephyrion [between Alexandria and Canopus] — TRANSLATORS.

Less joy have I herein than agony
To know my lady ever far from me,
With whom when she was maid, I drank untold
Abundance of sweet perfumes manifold.
But, lady mine, when on the stars you gaze,
While festal lamps in Venus' honour blaze,
Since I am yours, to me abundance sweet
Of perfume give, till all the stars repeat
With one accord: " O! were your lady mine!
Orion by Aquarius might shine."

— HUGH MACNAGHTEN [22]

The modern reader will not find it easy to adapt himself to the baroque style of this elegy; it is possible that the ancient reader was at first similarly affected. What surprises us most is the fact that the lock is made the speaker in a long poem, but this would not strike an ancient reader as strange, since the epigram had accustomed the ancients to speeches by inanimate objects. From the earliest times, poetic inscriptions were freely put into the mouths, as it were, of graves and votive offerings. As early as the sixth century we find in the epigrams tombs, statues, athletic implements, drinking cups and bowls speaking; why should not a consecrated lock utter speech? The only difference is that, while votive offerings are wont to be concise, the lock becomes diffuse in almost a hundred verses. We have already become acquainted with the rise of human relations and feelings to superhuman heights (p. 108) in the dirge in

[22] From *The Poems of Catullus*, by H. Macnaghten. Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company.

honor of Arsinoë, with which the present poem is, in many respects, the most closely related of all of Callimachus' works. But what was set forth there with weighty gravity is here frequently turned into mirth and frivolity. The liberty which the old and renowned poet and scholar takes in teasing his young and royal compatriot is amazing. The description of the nuptial night and the amorousness of the queen, which strikes modern taste as being unduly coarse, was probably somewhat coarsened by Catullus. But, even if the tone be softened, as is done in the translation I have cited, the fact remains that Callimachus says things to his princess which no poet would have dared to say to a queen or a princess at the court of Louis XIV. The pathos, too, in places is so exaggerated that it calls forth a smile, especially in the comparison of the tunneling of Mount Athos with the cutting of the lock; but again there occur serious passages. Truly Callimachean is the entirely unexpected end, where the lock is so overcome with longing for its old place on Berenice's head that the entire arrangement of the fixed constellations in the heavens is of no consequence to it.

Here we see again united all those variegated elements which make Callimachus' art so inconsistent and so fascinating: spirit, wit, imagination, taste, mastery of form. Of all qualities that go to make a poet, he was denied but one — that, to be sure, the greatest of all — intense and lofty feeling; [23] thus Ovid's verdict upon him is justified:

[23] To the real feeling which he possessed he gave purest expression in his epigrams (see section 5).

Even throughout all lands Battiades's name will be famous;
Though not in genius supreme, yet by his art he excels.

The bloom of Alexandrian elegy did not apparently long survive its master; it is noteworthy that the really productive period of Hellenistic poetry covered hardly more than fifty years. Callimachus' countryman and pupil, Eratosthenes of Cyrene, approached his art most closely. A fine critic of the earlier empire calls his elegiac narrative, *Erigone*, a "little poem, blameless in every respect."

The elegy treats the story of Icarius and his daughter, mentioned above (p. 112), essentially in the setting used by Callimachus. But, in contrast with Callimachus, the chief personages are metamorphosed into stars at the end of the poem: Icarius into the constellation of the Wain, his daughter into the Virgin, and his faithful dog into Sirius (the Dog Star). But though Eratosthenes wrote other poems also, yet his most important activity was scholarly research. In this department he developed a versatility which no one else after Aristotle ever attained. As the head of the library he assumed the title of philologist, and his investigations, particularly in the field of Old Comedy, are valuable contributions. Yet much more significant are his attainments in the field of mathematics, chronology and geography; geography attained scientific character first through his efforts.

Parthenius of Apamea in Bithynia is named with Callimachus as a classic author of elegy by Pollianus, an epi-

grammatist of the Empire; but this estimate is certainly beyond his merits. According to the scanty fragments which we possess of him, he was only a late and feeble imitator. The importance of Parthenius, who came to Rome as a captive in the Mithridatic War (73 B.C.) and was there emancipated, consists chiefly in the fact that he acted as an intermediary in introducing Alexandrian poetry and its learned sources to the Romans. We possess his booklet, written in prose, *The Sufferings of Love*, which, according to its dedicatory epistle, was intended to furnish his patron, the Roman poet Cornelius Gallus, with themes for epics and elegies. Together with a copious citation of sources, thirty-six stories of unhappy love, for the most part not generally known, are here presented. Vergil, too, is mentioned as his pupil and has translated one of his verses, almost literally, in his *Georgics*. The Emperor Tiberius esteemed him highly, and the Emperor Hadrian rebuilt his tomb, as an inscription now lost informs us. However, this comparatively enduring fame of Parthenius must not cause us to overestimate his influence upon the great Roman elegiac poets, Tibullus, Propertius, Ovid, and their forerunner Catullus. Actually the Romans changed the content of elegy into something quite new — a detailed treatment of individual love experiences. The Hellenistic epigram may have offered them a store of effective motifs; but we have thus far no evidence of the existence of long poems of subjectively erotic content among the Alexandrians, and it is very likely

that they never existed. Goethe's *Roman Elegies* are related not to Callimachus but rather to the Roman "Triumvirs of Love."

2. THE EPIC

a) The Heroic Epic

Among the Hellenes the stream of epic poetry was never entirely dried up. Around the *Iliad* there arose the poems of the epic cycle, which related the happenings which preceded and followed the action of the *Iliad;* this entire epic mass bore the name of Homer until about the end of the fifth century. Aristotle was the first to limit the work of Homer to the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* (though he let the mock epic *Margites* pass as Homeric), a view which later gained general acceptance. And now there began a diligent search for names for the authors of the cyclic poems, which had in fact been anonymously transmitted. The mythological and genealogical poetry like Hesiod's similarly continued into the fifth century. But in this instance a clear distinction between the *Theogony* of Hesiod and the genealogical poetry connected with it was not drawn as it was in the case of epic poetry between Homer and the poets of the *Cycle.* The late *Catalogues of Heroines* continued to be read as Hesiodic, and for this reason the Egyptian papyri restore to us an ever increasing quantity of these

epics of the Epigoni, while not a scrap from the epic cycle has turned up in Egypt. Besides the two great spirits, Homer and Hesiod, who continued productive even in death, there were in Ionia poets of more tangible personality who lived in historic times. I will mention only Panyassis, an older relative of Herodotus, who composed a *Heracleia* about the middle of the fifth century, and Antimachus, the author of the *Lyde*, who composed a *Thebais* about the year 400. Bolder was the venture of Choerilus of Samos (about the end of the fifth century), who treated the Persian Wars in the epic meter. But though this attempt may have attained a certain success, on the whole the later epic was of little consequence in the literature of the fifth and fourth centuries; it paled into insignificance beside the shining splendor of the Attic Tragedy. When the Alexandrians consciously attempted to create a new poetry in tacit opposition to the Attic, the important question arose as to what attitude should be taken toward the Ionic epos. The want of new epic poetry was felt. Alexander had taken in his train the epic poet, Choerilus of Iasos, in the hope that he would become a new Homer for the new Achilles — a hope in which he was wretchedly disappointed. There were those who held it possible and desirable for the great heroic epic to be resumed in the style of the cyclic poets, somewhat modernized perhaps, under the influence of Antimachus. Against this view Callimachus and his school waged vehement war. Time and again he insists on the

rejection of the cyclic epic. When he says, "A big book is a big evil," he is thinking of corpulent epic. "I hate a cyclic [24] poem," he says in an epigram, and another shows how lightly he esteems even the productions of the older cyclic poets. He lets the epic of Creophylus of Samos, *The Sack of Oechalia*, speak for itself, and adds a disparaging verse at the close:

> A Samian gave me birth, the sacred bard
> Whose hospitable feast great Homer shar'd;
> For beauteous Iole my sorrows flow,
> And royal Eurytus oppress'd with woe:
> But mightier names my lasting fame shall crown,
> And Homer give Creophilus renown.
>
> — H. W. Tytler

Callimachus' pupil Theocritus harps on the same chord:

> For, even as I detest the artificer who essays
> High as Oromedon's crest a mansion of men to upraise,
> So the birds of the Muses I hate, who weary themselves in vain,
> Cackling early and late, to rival the Chian's [25] strain.
>
> — A. S. Way [26]

One must not believe that Callimachus would enter the lists against Homer himself. Parthenius (see p. 149) later dared to do so and called the *Iliad* "muck" and the

[24] Cf. p. 100 *supra*, note 7.

[25] That is, Homer's.

[26] From *Theocritus, Bion and Moschus*, by A. S. Way. Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company.

Odyssey "mud." But Callimachus was convinced that any attempt at a great epic would be wrecked on the comparison with the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, and that compared to these the older cyclic epics were worth little, an opinion which Aristotle had already expressed. He would by no means abandon epic treatment of the materials of the saga, but the new epic must differ from the cyclic in every respect. Here he considers three points of special importance. First, the subject matter must not be taken from the sagas which had been dealt with innumerable times and were familiar to everyone, but it was necessary to discover new and untouched material in the immense abundance of Greek legends. Second, the compass of the poem must be reduced, so that it might be possible to achieve finished mastery of form, which to Callimachus was a necessary requirement of the poetic art. Third, the tone of the treatment must be entirely individual, and such as to bring the people of former ages near to the modern reader.

As a model of this new epic style Callimachus himself composed the small epic *Hecale*. Of the characteristics of this poem finds in Egypt have now given us a somewhat clearer idea, although the total number of the new verses amounts to only about seventy. The subject is an episode from the adventures of Theseus, the conquest of the bull of Marathon. The poem begins with an entertainment at the home of the poor but hospitable Hecale. The name of this heroine survived in that of a small Attic rural community

and in that of a festival of Zeus, the Hecalesia, celebrated by the population of the surrounding country. The conclusion of the poem is devoted to the establishment of this festival. Hecale had prayed for the success of her bold young guest and had vowed a sacrifice to Zeus. But before Theseus returned victorious with the conquered monster, the good old woman had died, and the hero performed in her stead the sacrifice she had vowed. This saga, which the poet owed to some local chronicle of Attica, bears an aetiological character, and the poet might as well have included it in his *Aitia.*

The affectionate portrayal of detail with which the poverty of Hecale and her humble cheer are described was particularly effective. Ovid borrowed from the *Hecale* the colors for his idyllic pair, Philemon and Baucis. This pair has survived in Goethe's *Faust.* That the great heroes of antiquity could be placed in unpretentious, even needy circumstances was not altogether unheard of. The home of the godlike swineherd Eumaeus is luxurious compared to the hut of Hecale, but even so it showed rustic simplicity. But in general one is accustomed to see the Homeric heroes with all the circumstance of pomp and splendor, a splendor which had acquired its fairylike glitter through the dim recollection of the luxuriant Cretan-Mycenaean culture, and had made a powerful impression upon the Greeks of the seventh and sixth centuries. But in the meantime the standard of living had risen to extreme luxury. Even the palaces of Alcin-

ous and Menelaus could hardly impress the courtly circle of Alexandria. It was much more effective for the audience of Callimachus to see the heroes of the past represented as living under conditions which would appear quite unendurable to an educated Alexandrian.

An important point with reference to the style of composition of the *Hecale*, deduced from an Egyptian wooden tablet, is that about a hundred verses were devoted to a conversation between two birds, a considerable part of a poem that was surely not very long. The poet has inserted a rather detailed episode, whose motivation we are not able to discover, into the simple action of his poem. A crow relates to another bird the story of the birth of Erichthonius and the consequent wrath of Athena against the crows. She foretells further that the raven, heretofore white, would receive black feathers from the furious Apollo. Quite surprising is the conclusion of this bird episode:

While she spoke thus sleep seized her and seized her hearer.[27] They fell asleep but not for long; for soon came a frosty neighbour: "Come, no longer are the hands of thieves in quest of prey: for already the lamps of morn are shining; many a drawer of water is singing the Song of the Pump and the axle creaking under the wagon wakes him that hath his

[27] I agree with v. Wilamowitz in considering it certain that she who was relating this story while falling asleep was the crow and not, as some think, Hecale: the new arrival, then, must also be a bird.—So Professor Körte.

house beside the highway, while many a thirled smith, with deafened hearing, torments the ear."

— A. W. Mair [28]

This bold somersault of the imagination is very characteristic of Callimachus. The custom was for the birds to report the new day to mankind; the poets had many times used the cock's crow and the song of the lark to announce the dawn. Callimachus now turns the tables and has his birds deduce the coming of a new day from the restless activity of men. But the men whose early clamor was heard by the birds of the Attic mountains in the time of Theseus are in reality the inhabitants of the noisy metropolis of Alexandria. The noises which may often enough have disturbed his own morning slumbers — the song of the water carrier, the creaking of wagons and the smithy's clangor — Callimachus cleverly puts into the mouths of his mythical birds. Therefore, even in that class of poetry which least favors the portrayal of the personality of the poet and his period, Callimachus knew how to introduce modern and subjective elements.

The *Hecale* became an extraordinary favorite. In *The Argonauts* of Apollonius, which is but little later in date, its influence is noticeable. From the Augustan period we have an epigram of the elegant epigrammatist Crinagoras which enthusiastically praises it as a "work delicately executed, for which the poet summoned all the Muses' powers." Pre-

[28] From The Loeb Classical Library, reprinted by permission.

cisely what is most inconsistent in the little poem gave the greatest delight to the literary epicureans. The material was quite ordinary, but novel to its audience; the account was entirely without pathos, but in composition, verse technique and language it displayed the most exquisite art. The epyllion which treated with the most elaborate technique a strictly defined episode from the heroic saga became a favored form among the Hellenistic poets. Various examples have come down to us.

Particularly elegant is the *Heracliscus* of Theocritus, a poem of only a hundred and forty verses. Here the infant Heracles' adventure with the serpents is narrated with reference to the first Nemean epinicion of Pindar, but in quite a different style. I quote the first half:

When Heracles was waxen ten moons old,
Alcmena took both him and his brother twin,
Iphicles (one night younger, it is told),
And bathed and suckled them, then safe within
The hollow shield Amphitryon once did win
From Pterelaüs, a graven shield and fair,
She laid them down, and stroked her babies' hair,

Saying: 'Sleep, babes, a sweet and healthful sleep,
Oh sleep, my darlings, safely through the night;
In joy, dear baby brethren, slumber deep,
In joy behold the morrow's dawning light.'
So they were rocked asleep. But when the bright
'Orion's' shoulder glimmered, and the 'Bear'
Was sloping downward to his midnight lair,

Unto the threshold wide of that demesne,
Where stood the hollow pillars and the gate,
Two monster snakes bristling in azure sheen
Did guileful Hera send in bitter hate,
On Heracles their maw to satiate;
And so, uncoiling, those soft-gliding two
Along the ground their ravening bellies drew.

And from their eyne leapt forth an evil flame,
And from their mouths envenomed ooze did fall,
As ever nearer to the babes they came
With flickering tongues. But Zeus, who knoweth all,
Wakened the boys; his glory lit the wall,
And loud screams Iphicles when he espies
Those monsters' teeth above the buckler rise;

And with his feet he spurned the coverlet,
Striving to flee, but out flung Heracles
Both hands, which round the lithe necks tightly met,
(For there the poisons lie, which no man sees,
Of a deadly snake — shunned e'en by gods are these)
And round the suckling babe the coils were spread —
The nursling that a tear had never shed.

Quickly they loosed their aching spines again,
Striving from out their durance to be free.
Alcmena heard the cry and wakened then. —
'Amphitryon, rise; for fear hath hold of me.
Arise, and put not sandals on; for see
At dead of night the walls are glimmering
As with the dawn. Surely a dreadful thing

Hath happed within the house. Did'st thou not hear
How loud a cry our younger baby gave? '
She spake. He to his wife lent ready ear,
And leaped from bed to seize his falchion brave
Slung nigh his cedarn couch, a graven glaive.
One hand reached for the woven baldric good,
The other raised the sheath of lotus-wood.

Darkness again filled all that chamber fair.
Then called he to the drowsy-breathing thralls:
'Lights from the hearth, ho! Back with the door-bolts, there! '
And then a slave-girl, ta'en from Tyrian halls,
Cried: ' Bondsmen, rise; it is the master calls ' —
Her couch was by the mill-stones at the porch —
And forth they came with many a blazing torch.

All hastened, and the house was filled with din.
And when they saw the baby Heracles
With two dead snakes his tender fists within,
Astonied all cried out; but holding these,
He leaped for gladness, and, his sire to please,
Bade him behold the snakes with death fordone,
And laughing laid them nigh Amphitryon.

Alcmena to her bosom pressed his brother,
Iphicles, withered up and blanched with dread;
Amphitryon 'neath a lamb's fleece laid that other,
And then betook himself to rest and bed. . . .

— J. H. HALLARD [29]

[29] From *The Idylls of Theocritus, with the Fragments, Bion and Moschus*, by J. H. Hallard. Reprinted by permission of Messrs. George Routledge and Sons, Ltd.

Here the childish tone of the fairy tale is maintained with a faithfulness to which Callimachus hardly aspired. How the royal mother herself nurses and cares for her twins, how the captured shield must serve as cradle, how Alcmena, with true motherly instinct, is chiefly concerned for and bestows special care and pains upon the smaller, weaker son, how she drives her husband from bed, and milk fails her in her anxiety are all characterizations that are as remote as possible from the heroic, but they are delightfully charming in their naïveté. The tale borders closely on travesty when, after this remarkable exploit on his son's part, the father carefully puts the youngster under the coverlet and quietly retires to his slumbers again, as if the strangling of the serpents were only a minor disturbance of one's rest such as infants commonly occasion their parents.

The second portion of the poem does not quite reach the same high level. On the third day Alcmena fetches the seer Tiresias in order to have the miracle explained. The seer briefly foretells the entire heroic career of Heracles until his admission to the circle of the gods, and then elaborately arranges a sacrifice of expiation. Here the poem might have closed; Pindar, in fact, concluded his poem with the prophecy of Tiresias, which rises to incomparable grandeur. But Theocritus has no desire to achieve grandeur; he proceeds to describe the entire education of the little Heracles. With much erudition all the boy's teachers are

enumerated. Linus taught him reading and writing; Eurytus, archery; Eumolpus, music; Harpalycus, wrestling and boxing; Amphitryon, chariot driving; Castor, the profession of arms. In conclusion the strict Doric manner of young Heracles' life is described. A lion skin is his bed. During the day he fares scantily on uncooked food, but in the evening he has a roast and a great Doric loaf, "sufficient to fill a peasant to satiety." His attire is simple and reaches only to the calf. The mention of the crude Doric loaf in particular served to assure merriment among the pampered audience.

There is another short poem concerned with Heracles among Theocritus' writings; it belongs to another able poet of the third century if not to Theocritus himself. Here the composition is quite peculiar. The work consists of two hundred and eighty-one verses, and falls into three loosely connected scenes. The situations may be understood only by reference to the titles — *Heracles to the Peasant, The Visitation,* (the third is missing) — a technique which reminds one of the modern cinema. The general background consists of the well-known Heraclean labor, the cleansing of the stables of Augeas, but this story itself is not told. The first picture shows Heracles in conversation with a slave of Augeas, and begins, without preface, with the answer of the slave to a question of Heracles. The old man describes in detail his master's wealth in cattle, and finally asks the unrecognized hero what he really wishes — whether he desires to speak to Augeas himself or to one of his serv-

ants. Heracles, without disclosing his identity, replies that he wishes to speak with Augeas, and then indicates that he would be content to speak to a steward of the king. Here the old man sees the king approaching with his son Phyleus, and bids Heracles follow him into his hut, where he may speak with the king.

This scene, then, contains no action whatever; its charm lies only in the description of the rural surroundings. Aside from the famous dog scene in the *Odyssey* there hardly occurs in Greek literature so understanding and affectionate a portrayal of the dog's nature as is found in the closing verses of this section. Heracles is walking with the farm slave to the latter's hut:

. . . . . And sudden the watch-dogs
Felt their approach from afar by their scent and the sound of their footsteps.
Barking loudly they dashed at Amphitryon's offspring from all sides,
Noisily too they fawned on the aged man. From the roadway
Lifting a stone (no more) he scared them, and menacing each one
Roughly and loud he stayed their barking, inly rejoicing
These, whilst he was away, had warders been of the farmyard.
Then spake thus: 'Now, alack, what a beast the immortal Rulers
Here have giv'n to abide with man, how wanting in foresight!

If but his mind had a little of sense, and he wist of the seasons
When to be angry, and friend from foe he knew, not another
Creature had earned such praise, but now too wrathful and fiery
Ever is he.' So spake he, and swiftly they came to the steading.

— J. H. HALLARD [30]

Without transition the second scene describes how Heracles, still unrecognized, looks on with Augeas and his son while the endless herds of cattle which Father Helios gave the king move towards their stalls at eventide. The pride of the herds, a particularly powerful white bull, attracted by the lion skin of Heracles, charges the hero, but Heracles seizes him by the horn and hurls him to the ground. When the poet turns to describe the protruding muscles of the hero's forearm, one can clearly see the Hellenistic statues of Heracles which outdo one another in the representation of mighty muscles. The third scene, again without connection, shows Heracles on his way to the city with Phyleus. The young prince, upon whom the taming of the steer had made a deep impression, timidly asked his companion whether he was the slayer of the Nemean lion, about the conquest of which the prince had received vague reports. And with this the whole poem is ended. It is not, as was formerly believed,

[30] From *The Idylls of Theocritus, with the Fragments, Bion and Moschus*, by J. H. Hallard. Reprinted by permission of Messrs. George Routledge and Sons, Ltd.

unfinished or mutilated; the poet has purposely limited himself to selecting certain pictures from the generally known Heracles saga and has presented these pictures with new designs and colors.

It is apparent that it was not always necessary to search out the more obscure sagas, as Callimachus had done in the *Hecale*. Even in the circle of the best-known sagas there was material for the creation of epyllia, which, through individuality of treatment and refinement of form, avoided the triviality of the cyclic poets, which had been proscribed and banished.

Thus the unknown poet of a Berlin papyrus even dared to borrow for his fine little epic from the cyclic poem *Alcmaeonis:* of this epyllion we have unfortunately but slight remains. The material is concerned with the battles of Diomedes before the Trojan War. His little son, whom he has left in Argos under the care of a faithful servant Pheidon while he is himself on an expedition to Aetolia, is in danger of falling into the hands of the enemy. The description of old Pheidon in his rustic hut occupies ample space. There is a leisurely discussion of breeds of dogs. In short, here apparently, as in the *Heracles*, the chief interest lies in the detailed description of the surroundings. Unfortunately we possess none of the older Alexandrian epyllia that treat of erotic material, but from titles and fragments we may see that they sang of extraordinary love adventures with detailed psychological description.

The most productive and most celebrated poet of the epyllion after the style of Callimachus was Euphorion of Chalcis in Euboea. About a generation younger than Callimachus (he was born 276–5), he demonstrates strikingly the speed with which the Alexandrian style attained the upper hand in the contemporary Greek world. The reports of Euphorion's life, which we possess in relatively large number, show that his entire life was lived in regions which were not under Ptolemaic sway. In his home country, Euboea, he had a love affair with the elderly widow of a tyrant, Alexander; he then spent some time in Athens, where he attained citizenship; in his later years he received a call from King Antiochus the Great to head the library at Antioch on the Orontes; and he appears finally to have died at Athens. And yet this man, who probably never visited Alexandria and was active as the head of the chief competitor of the Alexandrian Library, is an almost slavish imitator of the style of Callimachus. By later writers he was usually classed with Callimachus, and for the younger generation of Roman poets in the time of Cicero he became the model, so that Cicero could designate the entire movement, for which he had little sympathy, as " the singers of Euphorion." With the Augustan poets he had less influence, but the Emperor Tiberius valued him highly, Quintilian names him with respect, and a sheet of the Berlin collection of papyri from a Pergamene manuscript of the fifth century A.D. shows how long he continued to be read. Of his numerous poems,

one, the *Chiliades*, is directed against those who had deceived him in money matters. He prophesies misfortune for them, and in order to frighten them cites a long list of prophecies which had late fulfillment. Similar is the content of another poem, *The Curse, or The Cup Thief*, in which he threatens with an entire catalogue of mythical punishments a man who has made away with a cup of his. The motives in both instances are probably invented, and the model for each was doubtless Callimachus' *Ibis*. The prophecies and curses are the convenient threads on which Euphorion strings the pearls of his learned mythological narratives — pearls, to be sure, with but a dull polish. One page of the Berlin sheet belongs, in my opinion, to *The Cup Thief*, and I shall attempt to give an example of this author's obscure and ornate style through the translation of the better preserved portion:

Or as the travellers were dashed to death
Where Skiron his unseemly foot-bath planned —
Yet not for long, since Aithra's mighty child
Subdued him, and his fat made the last feast,
To glut that greedy tortoise of our land.
Or else may Artemis, Queen of Tainaron,
That comes as helper in the pangs of birth,
Speed against him, from eager bow, her shaft.
By Acheron may he bear the heavy rock
That Deo put upon Askalaphos
In anger, for that he alone betrayed
The secret that condemned Persephone.

— E. D. Perry

In this piece the myth is not so very obscure. Sciron was one of the monsters slain by Theseus. This monster was accustomed to sit upon a cliff of dizzy height which dropped perpendicularly to the sea, on the road from Corinth to Athens in Megarian territory; this road still leads along the precipitous cliff hard by the sea. He would force passing travelers to bathe his feet, and while they were performing this office he would thrust them into the sea with his foot, where their shattered bodies were devoured by a gigantic tortoise. Theseus consigned the monster to the same fate. This story had been a particular favorite in poetry and plastic art, especially that of Attica, since the age of the Pisistratidae. The only novel and original features introduced here are the ornate expressions and a certain affectation, perhaps, in the application of the striking epithet " our " to the tortoise. Sciron belonged not to Attica but to Megara; but the Athenians strove to annex the Megarian country, at least in the mythical period, since their efforts to do so in the historical period never met with success. Euphorion had been granted Athenian citizenship, and he displays his Attic patriotism, therefore, in his reference to the tortoise " of our land." In the second imprecation, that Artemis strike him with her arrows, the invocation to the goddess of birth and death for the punishment of a man is bewildering; we should have expected Apollo. But it was just because an invocation to Apollo would naturally be expected that the fastidious poet disdains it. It is in-

correct to conclude from these verses that the person upon whom the imprecations are called down is a woman. The material of the third imprecation is also quite well known. When Pluto had abducted Persephone and the despairing mother had finally discovered where she was, Zeus decreed that the daughter might return to her mother if she had not as yet tasted anything in the nether world. But Persephone had eaten a pomegranate seed, as Ascalaphus attested, and so the goddess had to abide in the nether world for a third of the year at least. The angry Demeter punished the witness by rolling a great stone over him.

Even more unsatisfactory than the labored application of the myths is the affected, obscure character of the language, which can be but imperfectly reproduced in translation. Since the time of Philetas, learned poets had sought to use words from the old epic language, words which had fallen into desuetude and were entirely unintelligible to a Greek of the period — "glosses," so called; or they used words with a significance which they no longer possessed in the living tongue, but which they had had in Homer.

Callimachus uses not a few of these "glosses," but with him the pursuit of unfamiliar words and forms did not attain the pitch of fanaticism it reached in Euphorion. The latter had a predecessor in this regard in his compatriot Lycophron (see section 4). Occasionally these learned gloss hunters completely misunderstood the meaning of Homeric words. For example, the Homeric interjection *o popoi*, so

often used, they took to be a form of invocation to the gods, and cheerfully proceeded to use *popoi* to mean "gods." Moreover, the imitation of Homeric abbreviated forms becomes grotesque in Euphorion. Because in Homer peculiar shortened forms of certain substantives occur, he ventures the form "Hel," which was not intelligible to any Greek, and leaves it to his commentators to quarrel as to whether he intends the word *helios* (sun) or *helos* (nail) to be understood.

The finding of the Berlin papyrus has not improved our estimate of Euphorion, and we can scarcely understand how antiquity placed him side by side with Callimachus. In him the dangerous aspects of the Callimachean style are developed into a mannerism, but he does not possess Callimachus' spirit and taste: he resembles his model, therefore, somewhat as the ape resembles man. The fact that the Augustan poets entirely freed themselves from this mannerism which had left its stamp upon the generation of Catullus is the best proof of their wholesome taste.

The Alexandrians themselves found no lasting enjoyment in the over-spiced savor of the manner of Euphorion. About a century after his time, the epyllion *Europa* came from the hand of Moschus, a Syracusan living in Alexandria. Here the scholarliness and mannerisms of Euphorion are abandoned, and the rape of Europa is related quite simply and with graceful playfulness. Moschus does not quite attain the liveliness and vigor of Theocritus' *Heracliscus*, but he

approaches Theocritus much more closely than does Euphorion. The charming story of how the king of the gods, transformed into a bull, surprised the daughter of Phoenix as she was plucking flowers by the seashore, how he carried her away over the sea to Crete on his back, and how she there bore him the three kings, Minos, Rhadamanthus and Sarpedon, apparently became popular through the work of Moschus, which was also used by Ovid, and has influenced art down to the delightful painting by Paolo Veronese in the Doge's palace at Venice.

The poem opens with an account of a dream Europa has had, obviously influenced by the famous dream of Atossa in the *Persae* of Aeschylus:

To Europa did Cypris send a sweet dream long ago,
When the night drew on to its end, when near was the dawning-glow,
When sleep that relaxeth the strained limbs sweeter than honey lies
On the eyelids, and softly chained by its fetters are weary eyes,
When, like sheep from the meadows, true dreams out of shadows of darkness rise.
Even then, as lay on her bed 'neath her home's roof slumbering
Europa, a maid unwed, the daughter of Phoinix the King,
Two mainlands appeared before her; contending for her they were,
One Asia, the oversea shore the other: the forms they bare
Of women — an alien she, and she of her own land sprung,

As it seemed, and passionately to the maiden her child she clung;
And ever she cried: " I bore her, I also gave her the breast! "
But the other with strong hands tore her away, and strove to wrest
The maid, nothing loth, from her ward; and still, with insistent cries
Said: " Zeus the Aegis-lord hath decreed Europa my prize! "
And the maiden awoke, and quaking sprang from her bed; with fear
Her heart beat hard, for a waking vision did all appear.
Long silent sat she there, amazed and wide-eyed: still
On the women twain did she stare, for her vision they seemed to fill.
And at last did the maiden cry in her fear and her wonderment:
" Ah who of the Dwellers on High these phantoms to me hath sent?
What manner of dreams with dismay have thrilled me, here mid my bowers
On my soft-strown bed as I lay and slept through the darkling hours?
Now who was the alien dame whom I saw in the slumber-tide?
How leapt in mine heart a flame of love! — how gracious-eyed
She gathered me unto her breast as with yearning of motherhood!
Ah, may the Gods ever-blest accomplish my dream in good! "

— A. S. Way [31]

[31] From *Theocritus, Bion and Moschus,* by A. S. Way. Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company.

This little prelude is calculated to produce the proper mood in Europa and in the readers. The maid has a premonition that she is to undergo some wonderful adventure, and she willingly yields to the enticing voice of a strange woman.

In the morning she goes with her companions to a meadow by the seashore to gather flowers. Here the poet inserts an extensive description of Europa's golden flower basket. Lengthy descriptions of this kind, which go back to Homer's description of the shield of Achilles as their first progenitor, are a usual feature of the Alexandrian epyllion. The Roman Catullus employs one in his *Marriage of Peleus and Thetis*, a poem which derives from Alexandrian models. More than half of its four hundred and eight verses are devoted to the description of a purple tapestry cover on which the bride is seated; in fact the story of Ariadne represented in the embroidery constitutes the most charming portion of the entire poem. Moschus' twenty-six-line description of the basket is modest compared to Catullus' description; it serves to create the proper mood, for on it is represented the story of Io, who was beloved of Zeus and transformed into a heifer — a fate which was closely related to that of Europa. Zeus in his ardent love for Europa has transformed himself into a noble bull in order to deceive the jealous Hera, and joins the flower-plucking maidens:

To the meadow he came by the beach; and the maidens knew
no fear

Of his coming, but woke in each a desire to draw more near,
And to touch the bull sweet-seeming. His breathing's fragrance went
Over the mead far-streaming, surpassing the flowers' rich scent.
He stood before the feet of Europa the noble and young,
And he licked her neck, and a sweet spell over her spirit he flung;
And with lingering touch she caressed him, and wiped the plenteous flow
Of foam from his mouth, and pressed her lips to the star on his brow.
Gently the seeming-brute 'gan low: thou wouldst say 'twas the sound
Of a clear Mygdonian flute that murmured music round.
Down at her feet did he stoop, and he gazed appealingly,
Turning his neck, as to mean: "On my broad back throne thee, my queen!"
And unto the heavy-tressed troop of her maiden friends did she cry:
"Hither, companions dear and young! Now mount we arow
For disport on the bull bowed here: for us all is there room enow,
So huge a back boweth he; like a ship on the strand it lies!
Tame is he and gentle to see, not like in any wise
Unto other bulls, but the heart of a man beats in him, of one
Who knoweth the righteous part, and he lacketh speech alone."
So spake she, and smilingly herself on his back did she seat;

And the rest, her fellows, drew nigh: but the bull straight leapt to his feet,
Having won his coveted prey, and swiftly drew nigh to the sea.
She turned her about in dismay, and to those dear friends cried she,
Outstretching her suppliant hands, but they strove to reach her in vain.
Spurned by his feet were the sands, like a dolphin he leapt o'er the main:
From wave to wave did he race with hooves unwetted of spray,
And ever the sea's broad face grew calm as he sped on his way.
All round did the sea-beasts leap before the feet divine;
Glad dolphins rose from the deep and tumbled o'er surges of brine.
Rose Nereids up from their caves, and on huge sea-monsters seated
Over the flashing waves in triumph-procession fleeted.
And the Lord of the loud sea-thunder, the Earth-shaker, stood on the sea,
And he levelled the billows, and under his brother's feet made he
A straight sea-highway, and round him gathered a Triton-train,
Haunters of holy ground far under the deep-flowing main,
And from tapering conchs did they sound long notes of a bridal strain.
But she, by the shape on-borne for a God's disguising wrought,

With the one hand grasped the horn of the bull, with the other upcaught
Her purple mantle's fold, that it might not trail out free
And be drenched by the waves untold and the silver spray of the sea.
By a following wind swelled wide her fluttering mantle blew
Sail-wise, and over the tide as wafted on wings she flew.
— A. S. Way [32]

Entirely in accord with Hellenistic taste is the brilliant picture portraying Zeus transformed into a bull pursuing his bridal journey over the sea in the midst of all the sea creatures — a picture whose colorful throng recalls Böcklin. Especially the fanciful spirits of the sea — the Tritons — with their semi-bestial features, full of a yearning melancholy, constitute one of the most charming creations of Hellenistic plastic art. A well-known frieze at Munich, which was made for a Roman altar of Neptune about a hundred years after the time of Moschus, represents the bridal procession of Poseidon and Amphitrite similarly conceived. Here, too, Tritons blow on tapering shells before the king and queen of the sea and slender Nereids sit on the backs of fantastic sea monsters.

Characteristically Hellenistic also is the hint of perversity in the tenderness of the maid for the handsome bull. The Alexandrians are fond of describing unnatural passions —

[32] From *Theocritus, Bion and Moschus*, by A. S. Way. Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company.

the love of brother for sister, father for daughter, or daughter for father. In Moschus this passionate sensuality is less distasteful because the maiden recognizes the god in the handsome bull. In the course of the sea journey, Zeus reveals himself to the girl's timid questions and promises that she will bear him glorious kings in Crete. The arrival there and the consummation of the nuptials are briefly related, and the poem then breaks off. It was evidently mutilated even in antiquity, for the names of the sons, and especially the naming of the continent after Zeus's beloved Europa, must originally have been included.

Though Moschus' poem is neither deep nor rich in original elements, it shows, nevertheless, that, so far as the epyllion was concerned, Hellenistic poetry was capable of putting forth graceful blossoms over a relatively long period.

We have followed the Alexandrian epyllion down to its conclusion and must now again return to the period of Callimachus. In spite of his outspoken hostility to the great epic, this form, nevertheless, found adherents. We still possess the *Argonautica* of Apollonius of Rhodes, a poem which is less widely read, even by philologists, than it merits, and whose influence in world literature is generally underestimated. Among the notable poets of the earlier Alexandrian period Apollonius alone was born in Alexandria. The fact that he is also called a native of Naucratis would indicate that his father Silleus removed from this oldest

Greek city in Egypt to the new royal capital. It is, indeed, not without significance that for the first time we deal with a poet whose family was firmly rooted on the banks of the Nile. A recent papyrus find has shed new light on Apollonius' chronology, a matter which had previously been hotly contested. We now know that he was the successor of Zenodotus in the administration of the Alexandrian Library, and that he was the tutor of Ptolemy Euergetes. He would, therefore, not be much younger than Callimachus — perhaps ten years. Time and again he is called the pupil of Callimachus; his work exhibits indubitably the influence of Callimachus in meter, language, and many details. The peculiar point is that the disciple or younger contemporary was librarian at the time when Callimachus was compiling his great catalogue, that is to say, he either was his master's superior officer or at least occupied a higher rank. This fact may have been the source of their mutual discords. In the traditional account the dissension is based exclusively on their difference of opinion regarding the possibility of a great modern epic. That squabbles over questions of poetic theory may turn into highly embittered personal enmity is sufficiently shown, for example, by the relations of Schlegel and Schiller. So much, finally, appears certain, that the two were not only literary opponents but outspoken enemies. Callimachus' snub in the *Hymn to Apollo* (see p. 132) and his poem *Ibis* (p. 133) show with how much rancor the conflict was fought. Under Apollonius' name we possess a de-

rogatory epigram directed against Callimachus' *Aitia;* it can hardly be attributed to our poet, however, on account of its coarse dullness, and is probably a forgery. Apollonius was worsted in the contest, at least outwardly. He gave up the headship of the library, hardly altogether voluntarily, left Alexandria, and was succeeded as librarian and tutor to the prince by Callimachus' fellow-countryman and friend, Eratosthenes. Apollonius then went to Rhodes, became a Rhodian citizen, and probably died there; [33] his regular epithet, "the Rhodian," shows that he lived there for a long time. Apollonius also was both scholar and poet. His scholarship is sufficiently attested by his headship of the library; furthermore, we know of writings from his hand on Hesiod, Archilochus and Antimachus. But, in contrast to his successor, Eratosthenes, his scholarly work was much less extensive than his poetry. Titles are known of a number of epyllia, treating principally of legends of the founding of cities, e.g., of Naucratis, Rhodes, Alexandria; but only his *opus magnum* is extant, the epic of the Argonauts. *The Argonautica* is the great epic of the Hellenistic period: although its 6,000 verses fall far short of the *Iliad's* 15,693 and the *Odyssey's* 12,110, yet the poem remains the only

[33] A *Vita*, indeed, reports that he later returned to Alexandria, won great success with his completed epic, became head of the library, and was buried by the side of Callimachus; but this information rests, as is shown by a papyrus, on a confusion with a younger, soon forgotten Apollonius, who was Eratosthenes' second successor in the administration of the library.

epic before Vergil's *Aeneid* that in respect to material and extent can be compared with Homer or aspire to such a comparison.

Apollonius is, so far as we know, the first epic poet who himself divided his work into books; for the division of the Homeric poems into books was first undertaken by the Alexandrian philologists. While their quite arbitrary division resulted for the *Iliad* in books of about six hundred and fifty lines, and for the *Odyssey*, of about five hundred lines, Apollonius arranges his books on a much broader plan, so that their length approximates that of a tragedy.

The first book begins with a short proem, quite dry and lifeless:

First in my song shalt thou be, O Phœbus, the song that I sing
Of the heroes of old, who sped, at the hest of Pelias the king,
When down through the gorge of the Pontus-sea, through the Crags Dark-blue,
On the Quest of the Fleece of Gold the strong-ribbed Argo flew.

— A. S. Way [34]

This proem takes into consideration the content of only the first two books, that is, the voyage to Colchis; the poet, therefore, provides the third and fourth books with individual proems. Although it can never have been the poet's

[34] From *The Tale of the Argonauts*, by A. S. Way. Reprinted by permission of Messrs. J. M. Dent and Sons.

intention to sing only of the voyage of the Argonauts to Colchis, it is probable, nevertheless, that he originally issued the first two books alone, and subsequently revised the first, at least, for the publication of the complete poem.[35]

Scant and inadequate, like the proem, is also the beginning of the tale. King Pelias of Iolcus was warned by an oracle against a man who should come to him wearing a single sandal. When his nephew Jason, having lost one sandal in crossing a mountain torrent, and wearing only the other, appears before the king during a sacrifice to Poseidon, Pelias recalls the warning and bids him go the perilous journey in the hope that he will perish in its performance. We do not learn how Jason receives the bidding, or how he enlists comrades for the adventure; nay, even the special task, the winning of the Golden Fleece, is not deemed by the poet worth further mention than the three words of the proem. These details were all familiar to the poet's readers, and the Alexandrians avoided nothing more scrupulously than wearying their hearers with a detailed account of familiar matters. Even the construction of the Argo at Athena's behest is disposed of in two verses. But now comes the catalogue of the Argonauts, and here the poet goes into greater detail, for he can then exhibit his erudition.

[35] In the scholia to the first book, variant readings, from a first edition, are cited six times; generally only a change of expression is involved. It is surely no accident that Theocritus takes only the first two books into consideration.

In more than two hundred verses fifty-five heroes, including Jason, are enumerated, among whom the best known are Orpheus, Heracles, Telamon, Peleus, Polydeuces, Castor, and Meleager. Several such lists of Argonauts had been drawn up by poets and mythographers, and the fashion set by the *Iliad* enjoined the insertion of a catalogue. But the editor who inserted the catalogue of ships into the *Iliad* had sufficient artistic perception to place it not at the beginning of the entire work, but rather at the appropriate place in the second book, after the interest of the audience had already been vigorously aroused by stirring scenes. The list of those participating in the adventure of Jason is not unskillfully made, but is by nature dry; placed at the opening of the poem, it constitutes a trial of endurance for the reader's patience. Poet and audience alike are first warmed when the departure of the heroes is described in a sentimental strain; the farewells of Jason and his mother are depicted with especial sympathy. His mother, Alcimede, complains, at the final embrace of her son:

'Oh, that on that same day when I, the affliction-oppressed,
Hearkened the voice of Pelias the king, and his evil behest,
I had yielded up the ghost, and forgotten to mourn and to weep,
That thyself, that thine own dear hands, in the grave might have laid me to sleep,
O my beloved! — for this was the one wish unfulfilled:
But with other thy nursing-dues long had mine heart in contentment been stilled.

And I, of Achaia's daughters the envied in days that are gone,
Like a bondwoman now in tenantless halls shall be left alone,
Pining, a hapless mother, in yearning for thee, my pride
And exceeding delight in the days overpast, for whom I untied
For the first time and last my zone; for to me beyond others the doom
Of the stern Birth-goddess begrudged abundant fruit of the womb.
Ah me for my blindness of heart! — not once, not in dreams, might I see
The vision of Phrixus' deliverance turned to a curse for me!'
So mourned she, and ever she moaned amidst of her speech, and thereby
Stood her handmaids, and echoed her wail, an exceeding bitter cry.
But the hero with gentle words for her comfort made answer, and spake:
'Fill me not thus overmeasure with anguish of soul for thy sake,
Mother mine, forasmuch as from evil thou shalt not redeem me so
By thy tears, but shalt add the rather woe unto weight of woe.
For the Gods mete out unto mortals afflictions unforseen:
Wherefore be strong to endure their doom, though thine anguish be keen.
Take comfort to think that Athênê hereunto our courage hath stirred:

Remember the oracles: call to remembrance how good was the word
Of Phœbus: be glad for this hero-array for mine help that is come.
Now, mother, do thou with thine handmaids in quiet abide in thine home,
Neither be as a bird ill-omened to bode my ship ill-speed;
And escort of clansmen and thralls thy son to the galley shall lead.'

— A. S. Way [36]

The character which Jason reveals in his parting from his mother he retains throughout the poem: he is discreet, proper, quite weak, and somewhat colorless. He lacks entirely the overpowering force of the hero eagerly throwing himself into a dangerous adventure; for him the expedition for the Golden Fleece is a duty, not a joyful adventure. He lacks, too, the superior energy and prudence of the born ruler; circumstances and not his own personality make him the leader of the expedition. How different from Agamemnon, proud lord of men, or Odysseus of many devices!

The poet makes his heroes perceive that the leadership belongs by right to Heracles; Heracles, however, declines the honor and himself decides in favor of Jason. Places of honor aboard the ship are set apart for Heracles and Ancaeus. The remainder are assigned by lot, and Tiphys is made helmsman. The offerings at parting are minutely

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described, and from the omens the seer Idmon perceives that the expedition will succeed, but that he himself is fated to die far away in a distant land. After some wrangling and a song by Orpheus, the Argo finally makes for the sea, but

> . . . Tear-dimmed that day
> Were Jason's eyes, from the fatherland-home as he turned them away.
>
> — A. S. Way [37]

The parting tears of the leader of the host are very characteristic. In contrast with our Nordic warriors, even the Homeric heroes are not ashamed of tears, but they weep far less easily than Apollonius' Argonauts, whose tears flow at every opportunity. In this, as in many other respects, Vergil follows the Alexandrian poet.

Until the island of Lemnos is reached, nothing worthy of notice is offered by the voyage, which is described with geographical accuracy. But the adventure with the women of Lemnos gives occasion for an exhaustive exposition which constitutes the climax of the first book.

The women of Lemnos had failed to honor Aphrodite, and the goddess avenged herself on them by causing their husbands to neglect them for captive Thracian slave women. The embittered women therefore slew all the males on the island; only the princess Hypsipyle brought her father Thoas safely across the sea in a floating chest. For a year

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the women had dwelt alone upon the island under the rule of Hypsipyle. They were seized with great excitement at the arrival of the Argonauts.

Through the city the daughters of Lemnos into the folk-
mote pressed,
And there sat down, as Hypsipylê's self sent forth her behest.
So when they were gathered in one great throng to the
market-stead,
For their counselling straightway she rose in the midst of
them all, and she said:
'Friends, now, an ye will, good store of gifts to the men
give we,
Even such as is meet that the farers a-shipboard should bear
oversea,
Even meats and the sweet strong wine, that without our
towers so
They may bide, nor for need's sake passing amidst of us to
and fro
May know of us all too well, and our evil report shall go
Afar, for a terrible deed have we wrought, and in no wise, I
trow,
Good in their sight shall it seem, if they haply shall hear the
tale.
Lo, this is our counsel, and this, meseemeth, best shall avail.
But if any amidst you hath counsel that better shall serve
our need
Let her rise; for to this have I summoned you, even the
giving of rede.'
So spake she, and sat her down on the ancient chair of
stone

That of old was her sire's, and Polyxo her nurse uprose thereupon.
On her wrinkled-shrivelled feet she halted for very eld
Bowed over a staff; but with longing for speech the heart in her swelled.
And hard by her side were there sitting ancient maidens four,
Virgins, whose heads with the thin white hair were silvered o'er.
And amidst of the folkmote stood she, and up from her crook-bowed back
Feebly a little she lifted her neck, and in this wise spake:
'Gifts, even as unto the lady Hypsipylê seemeth meet,
Send we to the strangers, for thus were it better their coming to greet.
But you — by what art or device shall ye save your souls alive
If a Thracian host burst on you, or cometh in battle to strive
Some other foe? — there be many such chances to men that befall,
Even as now yon array cometh unforseen of us all.
But if one of the Blessèd should turn this affliction away, there remain
Countless afflictions beside, far worse than the battle's strain.
For when through the gates of the grave the older women have passed,
And childless the younger have won to a joyless eld at the last,
How then will ye live, O hapless? — what, will the beasts freewilled

On their own necks cast the yoke, to the end that your lands
may be tilled?
And the furrow-sundering share will they drag through the
heavy loam?
And, as rolleth the year round, straight will they bring you
the harvest home?
Now, albeit from me the Fates still shrink as in loathing and
fear,
Yet surely on me, when the feet draw nigh of another year,
The earth shall lie, when the burial rites have been rendered
to me,
Even as is due, and the evil days I shall not see.
But for you which be younger, I counsel you, give good
heed unto this,
For that now at your feet an open way of deliverance there is,
If ye will but commit your dwellings and all your spoil to
the guard
Of the strangers, yea, and your goodly city for these to
ward.'
She spake, and with clamour the folkmote was filled, for
good in their eyes
Was the word, and straightway thereafter again did Hypsi-
pylê rise,
And her voice pealed over the multitude, stilling the mingled
cries:
'If in sooth in the sight of you all well-pleasing is this
same rede,
Unto the ship straightway a messenger hence will I speed.'

— A. S. Way [38]

[38] From *The Tale of the Argonauts*, by A. S. Way. Reprinted by permission of Messrs. J. M. Dent and Sons.

Dialogue such as this, glowing with lifelike characterization, yet free from rhetorical pathos, is Apollonius' forte. The decrepitude of aged Polyxo is painted in rather strong colors, after the Euripidean manner, but the figure as a whole is lifelike. And how amusing it is that it was just this old woman who had nothing more to hope from life and but little to fear that gave expression to the yearnings which all he women cherished at heart, the queen not the least, but dared not speak of. The plan of the women meets at least with partial success. The Argonauts are invited into the city, but at first Jason alone, magnificently attired in a robe whose embroidery is described in almost fifty verses — our epic must not lack a modest counterpart to the shield of Achilles — goes to the palace of Queen Hypsipyle. In a very ingenious speech she reveals to him the fact that the island is without men. The first part of her narrative corresponds to the facts, but she dares not admit the general murder of all males on the island. According to her representation, the women of Lemnos had simply refused to admit their unfaithful husbands into the city upon their return from their Thracian expedition. The men had asked for their Thracian concubines and all their male children, and then had voluntarily emigrated to Thrace, where they were still living. Whether the hero saw through the deceit we do not learn. Jason accepts the invitation to come into the city with his comrades; but on the ground of his sad task he declines the proffer of the royal throne. Soon the heroes come

streaming into the city and are most lovingly received by the happy women. Cypris takes care that the isle of her husband Hephaestus shall not want for a future race of men. With feasts and revelry, in the arms of women, the heroes grow forgetful of their great goal until Heracles, who remained on board with only two companions, recalls them to their duty with blunt upbraiding. They obey him without delay, in spite of the clamor of the women. Jason's parting from Hypsipyle is accomplished without too great conflict of soul:

Yea, so doth Hypsipylê pray, as her clinging fingers strain
The hand of Jason, and stream her tears with the parting-pain:
'Go thou, and thee may the Gods with thy comrades scathless bring
Back to the home-land, bearing the Fleece of Gold to the king,
Even as thou wilt, and thine heart desireth: and this mine isle,
And my father's sceptre withal, shall wait for thee the while,
If haply, thine home-coming won, thou wouldst choose to come hither again.
Thou couldst gather from other cities a host unnumbered of men
Lightly — ah, but the longing shall never awaken in thee;
Yea, and mine own heart bodeth that this shall never be!
Yet O remember Hypsipylê whilst thou art far away,
And when home thou hast won; and leave me a word that thy love shall obey

With joy, if the Gods shall vouchsafe me to bear a son to my lord.'

Lovingly looked on her Aison's son, and he spake the word:

'Hypsipylê, so may the Gods bring all these blessings to be!
Howbeit a better wish than this frame thou for me;
Forasmuch as by Pelias' grace it sufficeth me still to live
In the home-land — only the Gods from my toils deliverance give!
But and if to return to the land of Hellas be not my doom,
Afar as I sail, and a fair manchild be the fruit of thy womb,
To Pelasgian Iolkos send him, when boyhood and manhood be met,
To my father and mother, to solace their grief, — if living yet
Haply he find them, — that so, in the stead of the prince their son,
They may win in their halls a dear one, to brighten the hearth left lone.'
He spake and was gone; and afront of his fellows he strode to the ship. . . .

— A. S. Way [39]

The whole Lemnian adventure is evidently paralleled by Aeneas' sojourn in Carthage and his adventure with Dido, but how dull the colors appear by the side of Vergil's powerful glow! Easily and quickly the liaison is made, and just as easily and quickly it is dissolved. The king of heaven need send no divine messenger to tear the dallying hero from

[39] From *The Tale of the Argonauts*, by A. S. Way. Reprinted by permission of Messrs. J. M. Dent and Sons.

the arms of his beloved. A few scornful words from Heracles, words not even directed at Jason, suffice to form and mature Jason's decision to depart. In his farewell speech we seek in vain for a word of sorrow, of apology, of comfort. The charming queen also, who had joyfully yielded herself to the foreign hero, makes no serious attempt to restrain him from his great task. She scarcely hopes for his return; with quiet tears she accepts the inevitable, and seeks comfort in the hope of a son. This love adventure is meant only as an episode of the same nature as are the tenderness of Nausicaa and the passionate desires of the goddesses Calypso and Circe in the *Odyssey;* the poet must therefore avoid too detailed a depiction of feeling. That Apollonius was capable of a richer representation of emotional reactions is demonstrated in the third book. It was precisely in view of this latter episode, which is the chief center of interest in the poem, that he found it necessary to use his powers sparingly in this episode.

We are left unmoved by the adventures that follow in the Hellespont and Propontis: the contests with the six-armed earthborn giants and the Doliones at Cyzicus, and the foundation of a sanctuary for the mother of the gods on Dindymum. Our poet's aetiological interests, as aroused by Callimachus, appear clearly in these incidents; whenever a stone, an altar, or a ritual of historical times can be referred to Jason and the Argonauts, Apollonius seizes the opportunity of connecting them, often to the detriment of his

narrative. It is only at the end of the first book that another absorbing story occurs. While Heracles is wresting a pine tree, roots and all, from the earth, to fashion an oar withal in a forest in Mysia near the later Cius, his beloved young squire Hylas goes to fetch him water. The nymph of the fountain draws the handsome lad down to herself. Only Polyphemus, one of the comrades, hears his cries, and he seeks him first alone; then he meets Heracles, and the latter, too, now wanders searching through the forests. Meanwhile the Argonauts, at the prompting of the helmsman Tiphys, have taken advantage of a favorable wind to make their departure, and only after a considerable time has elapsed do they become aware of the absence of the three comrades, Heracles, Polyphemus, and Hylas. Now a quarrel ensues. Telamon, with strong language, even with violence, would force a return to Cius. But the sea-divinity Glaucus appears from the depths and makes an announcement: Zeus's decree forbids Heracles the voyage to Colchis, Polyphemus is to establish the city of Cius in Mysia and there die, Hylas has become the husband of the nymph. Thereupon Telamon frankly asks pardon of Jason, who has been sorely angered, and pardon is granted in truly handsome words.

The entire Hylas adventure is intended, first, to account for the premature withdrawal of Heracles from the circle of the Argonauts; and, secondly, to give the *aition* (origin) of the Mysian Hylas cult. Polyphemus similarly is brought

into the story for aetiological reasons; his intrusion, in fact, disturbs the charming contrast between the helpless beauty of Hylas and the wild might of Heracles, seeking in vain to rescue his darling. That the whole story might be presented much more effectively was demonstrated by Theocritus, who, obviously with Apollonius' poem in view, treated the same legend in a most graceful manner in his poem *Hylas.*

The second book opens with a detailed account of the victorious fist fight of Polydeuces with the savage Amycus, king of the Bebrycians. Then follows the stirring story of King Phineus, whom Zeus had punished with blindness because he had misused his gift of prophecy and revealed to mortals the most secret decrees of the gods. To render his punishment the more severe, winged Harpies snatch the food that is set before him and befoul the remainder so that no one can endure the stench. Reduced to a mere shadow, he drags out a miserable existence, yet cannot die. He greets the arrival of the Argonauts with joy, for by virtue of his prophetic power he knows that only they can bring him deliverance from the Harpies. And the two sons of Boreas do in fact attack the swooping monsters with drawn swords and pursue them through the air to the isles of the Strophades, where Iris, the messenger of the gods, brings the pursuit to an end by an oath that the Harpies will spare Phineus in future. Meanwhile Phineus, now safe, relates to the Argonauts at the banquet as much of their destiny

as the gods allow him to reveal. The most important part of his revelation, which constitutes a close parallel to the prophecy of Circe in the *Odyssey*, is his explanation of how the Argonauts may pass safely through the Cyanean rocks that clash against one another at the mouth of the Bosporus. The voyage thence to Colchis he foretells in eighty-six verses so thoroughly and so tediously that one is later almost surprised to find the actual voyage described even more tediously. For the tasks to be performed at Colchis and for the voyage home, Phineus gives the following additional prophetic advice, on Jason's request: Jason must implore the aid of Aphrodite, and must make for home by another route. After the parting from Phineus, extended to considerable length by several smaller episodes, the Argonauts are immediately faced with the most dangerous adventure of all — the passage between the clashing rocks. Although the poet takes all conceivable pains to represent as impressively as possible the horror of this natural phenomenon, his description quite lacks the plastic impressiveness which renders Homer's description of Scylla and Charybdis unforgettable. Following Phineus' directions, they first let a dove fly between the parted rocks. The dove escapes unscathed but for her tail feathers; thereupon they summon all their strength and row the boat through the cleft. Yet would destruction have overtaken them had not Athena restrained the rocks and pushed the boat through; even so, they suffered the loss of the outer tip of the stern. Hence-

forth, however, the Cyanean rocks stand fixed immovably in accordance with the old law of fairy lore that any charm is forever ended if it is once successfully broken. This adventure quite drains the imaginative power of Apollonius for this book. Laboriously he drags his heroes and his readers along the entire southern coast of Pontus, and only rarely does a pretty conceit or a happy expression rise up like a green isle in this ocean of tedium.

Of significance for the action there is only the meeting with the four sons of Phrixus on the island of Ares, which had been dimly foretold by Phineus. These sons of Phrixus and the Colchian princess Chalciope desired, at the behest of their deceased father, to go to their ancestral home in Orchomenus, in order to take possession of their grandfather's estate. However, a storm had shattered their boat on the little island, and they now appear before the Argonauts as shipwrecked suppliants. Jason cordially receives his distant cousins — Aeolus was their common great-grandfather. He invites them to sail with him to Colchis, to assist in the winning of the Golden Fleece, and then to continue their journey to Orchomenus on the Argo. Their description of the strength and savagery of their maternal grandfather, Aeetes, and of the sleepless, immortal dragon that guards the Golden Fleece arouses great uneasiness, which Peleus attempts to allay with brave words. In company with the sons of Phrixus, the Argonauts now accomplish the last portion of their voyage, sail into the river Phasis, and anchor

their boat near the royal city Aea amongst thick rushes, which conceal it completely.

Apollonius opens the third book with a new proem, which summarizes the content of the first two books, and indicates in particular the principal motif of the third book.

Come, Erato, now, stand by me: of thy lips let me be taught
In what manner thereafter Jason the Fleece to Iolkos brought
Through the love of Medea: for thou in the things by the Cyprian ordained
Hast part, and maidens unwedded by thine enchantments are chained;
Wherefore it is that a name that telleth of love thou hast gained.

— A. S. Way [40]

Among the Muses Erato is chosen, because her name shows the same root as does Eros, and the love-motif stands in the foreground of the canto that follows. Apollonius in his work granted love a place as the motive force of the action to an extent unknown to the earlier epos.

In the *Iliad* love plays no part at all. The maiden for whose sake the princes Achilles and Agamemnon quarrel is considered only as a valuable possession. So far as the action is concerned, it would have been practically the same if the quarrel had arisen over a noble steed or a handsome suit of armor. In the cyclic epic *Aethiopis* it was only later exegesis

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that construed the love of Achilles for Penthesilea as the ruling motif. In the *Odyssey* the budding love of the maiden Nausicaa for the much traveled hero is sketched with penetrating tenderness; but it remains only a modest episode. Since the older tragedy did not know of love as the basic motif for tragic action, we may safely assume that until the second half of the fifth century love played a decisive rôle in no poetry of the elevated style. But then Euripides came and made love the basis of action in a whole series of tragedies. He was followed by Sophocles in the *Trachiniae*, and soon comedy eagerly took over this fruitful motif. New Comedy, which was the most effective and the most vital literary form in the generation preceding Apollonius, constructed its dramas almost exclusively on the basis of love. With our imperfect knowledge of early Hellenistic poetry we cannot decide with certainty, yet it is highly probable that Apollonius was the first who placed love in the foreground of the action in a heroic epic, although epyllia of erotic character had certainly been composed in Alexandria before his day. The effect of his discovery on the literature of the world has been enormous. Without his lovers Medea and Jason there would be no Vergilian Dido and Aeneas, upon whom in turn depend a long series of lovers in the literatures of the most diverse peoples. This fact alone assures his epic an honorable place in the history of the world's literature.

Whether or not the utilization of the love-motif in the

manner chosen was an unqualified advantage for his epic is another question. Vergil permitted only a small portion, though to be sure the most effective, of his epic narrative to be ruled by love. In Apollonius, however, love permeates the entire second half of the poem — by far its more important part. Every task which awaits Jason after the Argo has successfully arrived at Colchis is accomplished, as the proem rightly puts it, only " through Medea's love." Beside his beloved, who alone directs the action, the hero gradually sinks almost to the position of a supernumerary.

The importance which Apollonius attaches to the love-motif is indicated by the following fact. Elsewhere he employs the apparatus of gods sparingly; in this part of his poem he inserts, for the first time, an extensive scene of over one hundred and fifty lines in which the intervention of Aphrodite and Eros, the divinities of love, is depicted. His gods are not at all of superhuman size and grandeur; they do not move about in the mighty draperies with which the figures of the gods on the Pergamene altar are resplendent. In deed, in word, and in emotion they are even more human than the Homeric gods. They even have that admixture of small-town Philistinism which is so amusing in the gods of some of Callimachus' hymns.

Hera and Athena, the two heavenly protectresses of the Argonauts, are seriously concerned as to how they can assist their favorites in winning the Golden Fleece, and Hera resorts to the expedient of begging Aphrodite to set

the Colchian princess on fire with love for Jason through the agency of her son Eros:

Then soared they away, and unto the mighty palace they came
Of Kypris: her lord the Halt-foot God had builded the same
For his bride, when he led her forth from the halls of Zeus of yore.
So they entered the courts, and under the chamber-corridor
Stood, where the hands of the Goddess the couch of Hephaistus prepared.
But he at the dawning thence to his forges and anvils had fared
In the cavern wide of a sea-washed isle, where he aye wrought on
With the fire-blasts fashioning manifold marvels: but she alone
Facing the doors of the palace sat in a carven chair.
Over her shoulders white had she loosened the waves of her hair,
And a golden comb through their ripples she drew, and now would she braid
The long plaits up; but before her beheld she the twain, and she stayed
Her hand, and she rose from her throne, and bade them within her hall,
And on couches she caused them to sit; thereafter herself withal
Sat down, and her uncombed tresses coiled she about her head;
And smiling innocent-arch to the Goddesses twain she said:

'Dear sisters, what purpose or need hath brought you hither at last
Who have tarried so long afar? Why come ye? In days overpast
Not oft hath your presence been here — too great for such as I!'

— A. S. Way [41]

This goddess, who makes her husband's bed and dresses her hair without the assistance of a maid, quickly interrupts her toilette upon the arrival of company, and reproaches her guests for not having called on her for such a long time; she is an exact replica of the women of the petty Hellenistic bourgeoisie as they are described by Theocritus and Herodas (see section 4). Surely this goddess must have evoked a commiserating smile from the ladies of the court of the Ptolemies. When Hera then sets forth her request, Cypris pretends to be unable to assist them; her son Eros, the rascal, does not obey her! Disobedient children are also a favorite topic of conversation for Hellenistic burgher women:

'Hêrê, Athênê, my child would render obedience to you
More than to me: in your presence a little abashed shall he be
Bold boy though he be: — but nothing at all he regardeth me.
But ever he striveth against me, and laugheth mine hests to scorn.
Yea, I am minded, by that his naughtiness overborne,

[41] From *The Tale of the Argonauts*, by A. S. Way. Reprinted by permission of Messrs. J. M. Dent and Sons.

His evil-sounding shafts and his bow therewithal to break
Full in his sight: for of late this threat in his anger he spake,
That, if I refrained not my hands while his passion within him was strong,
My scathe upon my own head should be, upon me the wrong.'
So spake she: the Goddesses smiled, and each in her fellow's eyes
Looked: but again she spake, and her speech was burdened with sighs:
'Unto others my griefs be for laughter alone, and I ought not so
To tell them to all: — enough that mine heart must in bitterness know.
Howbeit, if this be all your soul's desire this day,
I will try, and with soft words win him: he shall not say me nay.'
She spake; and with touch caressing did Hêrê her slim hand take,
And, softly smiling the while, she answered, and thus she spake:
'Even so, Kythereia, with speed perform thou this our request
As thou sayest; and vex not thyself, neither strive with angered breast
With thy child: from his troubling of thee hereafter shalt thou have rest.'
She spake, and she rose from her seat, and Athênê passed at her side,
As forth they sped and away, they twain: but the Cyprian hied

To Olympus, and down its ridges, seeking her child, she passed.
And in Zeus's fruitful orchard-close she found him at last,
Not alone, Ganymedes was with him, the boy whom Zeus on a day
From earth unto heaven had brought to abide with Immortals for aye,
When he greatly desired his beauty. With golden dice these two
Were playing, even as boys like-minded be wont to do.
And already Eros the greedy the palm of his left hand pressed,
Filled full with the golden spoils of his winning, against his breast,
Standing upright; the while a sweet flush mantled and glowed
O'er the bloom of his cheeks: but the other was crouching on bent knees bowed
In downcast silence: he had but twain; on the earth he flung
One after other, by Eros's gibing laughter stung.
But, even as fared the former, he lost them, the last of his dice;
And with empty and helpless hands he went; and his down-drooped eyes
Marked not the coming of Kypris. Before her child did she stand,
And with loving chiding she spake, as she laid on his lips her hand:
'Why smil'st thou in triumph, thou naughty varlet? Hast thou not beguiled

Thy playmate? — and fairly has thou overcome that innocent child?
Go to now, accomplish my bidding, the thing that I shall ask;
And the plaything exceeding fair of Zeus shall requite thy task,
Which was fashioned by Adresteia his nurse for her babe's delight,
When, a child, he thought as a child, in the cave 'neath Ida's height.
A ball fair-rounded it is: no goodlier toy, I wot,
Couldst thou get thee mid all the marvels by hands of Hephaistus wrought.
Of gold be the zones of it fashioned; and round each several one
Twofold be the seams of broidery-thread that encircling run.
But the stitches thereof be hidden: there coileth around them all
A spiral of blue. From thine hand if thou cast it on high, that ball
Even as a star shall flash through the air in a fiery glow.
This will I give thee — but thou must bewitch with a shaft from thy bow
Aiêtes' daughter with love for Jason. But see that herein
Thou tarry not; else a meaner requital than this shalt thou win.'
So spake she, and welcome the word was; with gladness he heard that thing:
And he cast away those toys, and with eager hands did he cling
Clasping the Goddess's raiment about on either side.

And he pleaded with her even then to bestow it: but Kypris replied
With gentle words, — and his cheeks unto hers she drew the while,
And clasping him close she kissed him, and answer she made with a smile:
'Be witness now thy beloved head, yea, also mine,
That I will not defraud thee: indeed and in truth the gift shall be thine,
When the heart of Aiêtes' daughter is pierced by thine arrow divine.'
Then gathered he up his dice, and the tale of them heedfully told,
And he cast them into his mother's glistening bosom-fold.
By his baldric of gold he slung from his shoulder the quiver that leant
On a tree-trunk, and took the bow for sorrow of mortals bent.
From the fruitful orchard of Zeus's palace forth did he fare,
And thereafter came to Olympus' portals high in air.

— A. S. Way [42]

I have quoted this passage at such length because it shows a particularly pronounced Hellenistic coloring. This Eros, the wild, willful lad, who is truly a child and yet is feared by the gods, is one of the most charming and characteristic artistic creations of Hellenism. Conceived in a semi-allegorical fashion, yet quite free from the bloodlessness which almost always attaches to allegorical figures, not a god

[42] From *The Tale of the Argonauts*, by A. S. Way. Reprinted by permission of Messrs. J. M. Dent and Sons.

such as were the old cult-gods, yet conceived, in a semi-religious mood, as one of the intangible ruling forces of life, he is iridescent in all the hues which the rich but discordant Hellenistic culture afforded. Epigram introduced this Eros into literature, and the plastic arts adopted him with peculiar affection. Inevitably there hover before the reader of Apollonius' verses all the small works of Hellenistic art and their echoes in the Pompeian wall paintings, which present the boy Eros in the most diverse postures and occupations.

Quickly Eros fulfills his mother's behest. At Jason's suggestion, he himself and the sons of Phrixus, along with Telamon and Augeias, go to King Aeetes to attempt the winning of the Golden Fleece through friendly persuasion. When the heroes arrive at the palace of Aeetes where the king and his court are assembled, Eros discharges his unerring arrow at Medea, and then returns to Olympus:

And the God himself from the high-roofed hall forth-flashing returned
Laughing aloud. Deep down in the maiden's bosom burned
His arrow like unto flame; and at Aison's son she cast
Side-glances of love evermore; and panted hard and fast
'Neath its burden the heart in her breast, nor did any remembrance remain
Of aught beside, but her soul was melted with rapturous pain.
And as some poor daughter of toil, who hath distaff ever in hand,

Heapeth the slivers of wood about a blazing brand
To lighten her darkness with splendour her rafters beneath, when her eyes
Have prevented the dawn; and the flame, upleaping in wondrous wise
From the one little torch, ever waxing consumeth all that heap;
So, burning in secret, about her heart did he coil and creep,
Love the destroyer: her soft cheeks' colour went and came,
Pale now, and anon, through her soul's confusion, with crimson aflame.

— A. S. Way [43]

Detailed as is the account of how Eros was won to Jason's cause, his intervention to arouse Medea's love is entirely superfluous. That the barbarian maiden should be irresistibly attracted by the beauty of the imperiled hero of the Hellenes is entirely conceivable of itself, and the development of her passion takes place quite naturally before our eyes. Except Sappho, hardly a single Greek poet has so vividly and faithfully portrayed the conflict of emotions incident to the first awakening of love. It is in this delicate portrayal of emotions, rather than in the action, that the perennial charm of this book lies.

The negotiations of the Argonauts fail, as was to be expected. Although Argus, the son of Phrixus, eloquently sets forth to his grandfather the peaceful intentions of the Argo-

[43] From *The Tale of the Argonauts*, by A. S. Way. Reprinted by permission of Messrs. J. M. Dent and Sons.

nauts, praises their merits and stresses the value of their succor against the Sauromatae, enemies of the Colchians, nevertheless the king rages in savage anger against the foreign 'robbers' and against his own grandson. Even Jason's flattering speech fails to assuage his wrath. Scornfully Aeetes declares himself willing to present the Golden Fleece to Jason if he will demonstrate his divine power by plowing a field with fire-belching bulls, sowing therein the teeth of a dragon, and harvesting their crop. Compelled by necessity, Jason consents to undergo the tests, and returns to the ship with his comrades.

And Medea thereafter followed; and surged like a rushing
river
The thoughts through her breast — the thoughts that Love
awakeneth ever,
And before her eyes the vision of all evermore she had —
Himself, even like as he was, and the vesture wherein he was
clad,
How he spake, how he sat on his seat, how forth of the doors
he strode,
And she dreamed as she mused that all the world beside had
showed
None other such man. In her ears evermore the music rung
Of his voice, and the words that in sweetness of honey had
dropped from his tongue.
And she trembled for him, lest the bulls or Aiêtes himself
might slay
Her beloved, and took up a mourning for him, as though he
lay

Dead even now; and adown her cheeks soft-stealing tears
Flowed, of her measureless pity, her burden of haunting fears.
And she mourned, and the low lamentation wailed from her tortured breast:
'Why, wretch that I am, is this anguish upon me? — or be he the best
Of heroes, who now is to perish, or be he the vilest of all,
Let him go to his doom! — yet O that on him no scathe might fall!
Oh might it be so, thou Daughter of Perseus, Goddess revered!
Oh might he but win home, 'scaping his doom! — but if this be his weird,
By the bulls to be overmastered, or ever it be too late
Might he know it, that I be not forced to exult o'er the thing that I hate!'

— A. S. Way [44]

The idea that she could herself become Jason's savior is still far from the maiden's thoughts. Half struggling, she yields to the impression which the foreign hero has made upon her. As yet the budding love seems to her only sympathy; only in her last words does she approach the dangerous border line of the two feelings. But soon she is driven farther. It is Argus who first gives Jason the advice to use Chalciope, mother of Argus, as an intermediary in an ap-

[44] From *The Tale of the Argonauts*, by A. S. Way. Reprinted by permission of Messrs. J. M. Dent and Sons.

peal to Medea, who is expert in magic. Jason assents with hesitation, remarking aptly enough:

> . . . howbeit a pitiful hope is the best
> For our home-return, if this in the keeping of women must rest.
>
> — A. S. Way [45]

Several of the remaining Argonauts are ready to undergo the tests, but when Argus repeats his plan and Aphrodite sends an omen — a dove pursued by a hawk finds safety in Jason's lap — the seer Mopsus recognizes that Phineus' prophecy is about to be fulfilled; they will find salvation at the hands of the Cyprian goddess. Idas, who, as a pale reflection of Thersites, represents the opposition to Jason throughout the poem, protests in a scornful tone. Then it is determined to send Argus to his mother, Chalciope, and to bring the Argo out of her hiding place in the rushes. While Aeetes, long before warned by an oracle, contemplates the destruction by fire of his grandsons and the Argonauts together with their ship, Argus implores his mother to secure Medea's assistance. Chalciope had already conceived a similar design, but had not carried it out, through fear of her father. Medea meets her halfway. Her spirit has been haunted by a vision:

> For it seemed that the stranger had taken upon him the task; but she thought

[45] From *The Tale of the Argonauts*, by A. S. Way. Reprinted by permission of Messrs. J. M. Dent and Sons.

That it was not the Fleece of the Ram that he longed to win
for a prize,
Nor yet for the sake of this had he fared in any wise
To Aiêtes' city, but only to lead her, his wedded wife,
Unto his home; and she dreamed that herself did wrestle
in strife
With the bulls, and exceeding lightly the mighty labour she
wrought.
Howbeit thereafter her parents set their promise at naught,
For that not to their child, but to him, was the challenge to
yoke that team.
Wherefore contention of wrangling clashed through her
troubled dream
'Twixt her sire and the strangers: and lo, in her hand the
decision they laid,
That the issue should follow her will, and thoughts of the
heart of the maid.
And straightway the stranger she chose: all reverence thrust
she aside
For her parents; and measureless anguish seized them, and
loud they cried
In their fury, and sleep forsook her at that heart-thrilling
sound.
And all a-quiver with fear she upstarted: she stared all
round
On the walls of her chamber; her fluttering spirit back to her
breast
Scarce drew she: the words like a panic-struck throng
through her pale lips pressed:
'O wretched I! — how nightmare visions my spirit appal!
I fear me lest awful ills from the heroes' voyage befall:

And my heart, my heart for the stranger is tossed in a storm
of dismay.
Let him woo some girl in his own Achaia far away,
And be maidenhood mine, and mine in the house of my
parents to stay!
Yet — yet — though mine heart be by love made reckless,
the desperate deed
I will try not unbid by my sister — never! — except she
plead
With Medea to help in the toil, in her anguish of fear for the
sake
Of her sons: this might peradventure assuage my sore heart-
ache.'

— A. S. Way [46]

Psychologically the development is excellent: the dream first makes her heart's yearning plain to her; awakened, she seeks again to overcome her feelings. Yet she prepares her first measures in behalf of her beloved, persuading herself that she is interfering only for the sake of her sister and sister's sons. But she has not yet brought herself to such a pitch that she can seek her sister out:

She spake, and she rose from her bed, and she opened her
chamber door
Barefooted, in vesture of linen alone; and she yearned full
sore
To go to her sister, and over the threshold stole the maid:

[46] From *The Tale of the Argonauts*, by A. S. Way. Reprinted by permission of Messrs. J. M. Dent and Sons.

Yet lingering — lingering — long at the door of the chamber she stayed
Held by her shame. Then backward in sudden panic she fled,
And into her bower she darted, and shrank to the shadows in dread.
And backward and forward her purposeless feet ever paced in vain;
For whenso she braced her to go, shame fettered her feet with its chain,
And ever as shame plucked back, bold passion spurred her amain.
Thrice she essayed, thrice stayed she; but now at the fourth essay
Down on her bed on her face did she cast her, and writhing she lay.

— A. S. Way [47]

A maidservant had noticed her distraction and summoned her sister Chalciope to the weeping maiden. Even when her sister affectionately inquires for the cause of her sorrow, Medea alleges only anxiety about her nephews. But she is readily persuaded by the tearful mother to disregard her father's anger and assist the foreigners with her magic art. In the morning she will bring to Hecate's temple a charm to cast a spell upon the bulls. We have a detailed portrayal of her inner conflict in the stillness of the night. From this description I shall quote one simile, somewhat far-fetched, to be sure, as are all the original similes of Apollonius,

[47] From *The Tale of the Argonauts*, by A. S. Way. Reprinted by permission of Messrs. J. M. Dent and Sons.

yet possessed of a peculiar charm, and not without good reason imitated by Vergil in the *Aeneid*:[48]

And with thick fast throbbings struggled the heart in her breast alway;
As when on the wall of a dwelling the leaping sunbeams play
Flung up from the water that into a caldron but now fell plashing,
Or into a pail, and hither and thither the sunbeam flashing
In lightning eddy and flicker is dancing in mad unrest,
So quivered and fluttered the heart within the maiden's breast.

— A. S. Way[49]

The struggle between filial duty, modesty, and love leads her to the verge of suicide, but finally love and love of life carry the day. In the gray of dawn, attended by four maidens she drives her chariot to the shrine of Hecate. There she imparts her plan to her attendants, swears them to secrecy, and then dismisses them to dance and pluck flowers. At the same time Jason, endowed with glorious beauty by Hera, goes to the shrine in the company of Argus and the seer Mopsus. Before his arrival a neat little episode is inserted, which clearly echoes conversations of the birds in the *Hecale* of Callimachus:

[48] The still lovelier simile at the beginning of the seventh canto of Goethe's *Hermann und Dorothea* was probably also suggested by this passage.

[49] From *The Tale of the Argonauts*, by A. S. Way. Reprinted by permission of Messrs. J. M. Dent and Sons.

Now there is by the path through the plain, as ye draw to
the temple anigh,
A poplar that waveth his tresses of countless leaves on high;
And thereon had the crows ever-babbling pitched as it were
their tent,
Whereof one, clapping her pinions, beneath her as these
twain went,
The counsel of Hêrê chanted, mid high boughs swayed to
and fro:
'Lo there, what a pitiful seer! — even that which the
children know
His wit can in no wise conceive, how that no word sweet and
dear
Maiden will murmur to man, while strangers be loitering
near!
Avaunt, vile prophet and witless! — on thee not the Cyprian
Queen,
On thee not the gentle Loves of their kindness are breathing,
I ween!'

— A. S. Way [50]

Mopsus accepts the reprimand with a smile, stays behind with Argus, and bids Jason go on to the temple alone; Cypris will be his aid. Jason approaches the waiting maiden, but neither at first finds words:

So these twain stood — all stirless and wordless stood
face to face:
As oaks they seemed, or as pines upsoaring in stately grace,
Which side by side all still mid the mountains rooted stand

[50] From *The Tale of the Argonauts*, by A. S. Way. Reprinted by permission of Messrs. J. M. Dent and Sons.

When winds are hushed; but by breath of the breeze when
at last they are fanned,
Stir they with multitudinous murmur and sigh — so they
By love's breath stirred were to pour out all in their hearts
that lay.

— A. S. Way [51]

Jason is the first to speak. With great gentleness he seeks to gain the confidence of the trembling maiden, and then he humbly begs for her assistance. Love has not yet arisen in his heart. He sees in the maiden only his savior: it does not yet occur to him to promise to marry her and take her to his home. It is only her tender capitulation that arouses his own love also:

Extolling her so spake he; and her eyelids drooped, while
played
A nectar-smile on her lips; and melted the heart of the maid
By his praising uplifted: her eyes are a moment upraised to
his eyes,
And all speech faileth: no word at the first to her lips may
rise;
But in one breath yearned she to speak forth all her joy
and her pain.
And with hand ungrudging forth from her odorous zone hath
she ta'en
The charm, and he straightway received it into his hands full
fain.
Yea, now would she even have drawn forth all her soul
from her breast,

[51] From *The Tale of the Argonauts*, by A. S. Way. Reprinted by permission of Messrs. J. M. Dent and Sons.

And had laid it with joy in his hands for her gift, had he made request,
So wondrously now from the golden head of Aison's son
Did Love out-lighten the witchery-flame; and her sweet eyes shone
With the gleam that he stole therefrom, and her heart glowed through and through
Melting for rapture away, from the lips of the rose as the dew
At the sun's kiss melteth away, when the dayspring is kindled anew.

— A. S. Way [52]

She then gives him her instructions. He must perform a nocturnal sacrifice to Hecate and then anoint himself with the magic ointment, to be made thereby invincible for a single day. After he has yoked the oxen and sown the dragon's teeth, he is to cast a stone among the armed giants as they spring up out of the earth, whereupon they will tear one another to pieces; the survivors he will himself be able easily to overcome. Thereby the conditions for the winning of the Golden Fleece will be fulfilled. Upon these injunctions there follows a conversation which grows more and more affectionate as it proceeds; Jason finally asks Medea to accompany him to Iolcus as his wedded wife: as the savior of so many heroes she would be received there with the highest honor:

[52] From *The Tale of the Argonauts*, by A. S. Way. Reprinted by permission of Messrs. J. M. Dent and Sons.

'And nothing shall come between our love, and nothing shall sunder,
Till death's shroud fold us around, and our hearts are chilled thereunder.'

— A. S. Way [53]

Since it is time to depart, Jason then closes the conversation. Medea returns home in deep thought. She is not able to reply to her sister's questioning; in silence she crouches upon a low stool, sunk in meditation.

Herewith Medea's rôle for this book is finished; the remainder belongs to Jason. He accomplishes the weird, nocturnal sacrifice to Hecate, renders himself invulnerable and insuperable for a day through the magic ointment, forces the fire-belching bulls under the yoke to the astonishment of Aeetes and the Colchians, sows the field with the dragon's teeth, sets the earthborn warriors in conflict with one another by the casting of the stone, and overcomes the survivors. It is all graphically and effectively related: in these scenes Jason is truly a hero of compelling force. Yet the principal figure of the book is not Jason but Medea. The conflict in her spirit from the first awakening of passion to her confiding surrender to her beloved is painted with a forceful fidelity and realism such as hardly any other ancient poet attained in the portrayal of love. In this portrait one misses the epic grandeur which Vergil's Dido possesses in such

[53] From *The Tale of the Argonauts*, by A. S. Way. Reprinted by permission of Messrs. J. M. Dent and Sons.

high degree, but on the other hand the Colchian maiden radiates an intenser warmth than does the Carthaginian queen. In the portrayal of Medea's love Apollonius is at his best, and his contribution is all the greater since he has created a Medea quite different from the one familiar to his readers. Every Greek knew the Medea drawn by Euripides — the great sorceress, superhuman in power and passion, who forcibly suppressed every tender emotion, and who, to attain her single goal, a merciless revenge on her faithless husband, sacrificed the life of her own children. Apollonius' Medea, too, has superhuman powers — only so was she able to save her beloved — but in the third book every weird or superhuman characteristic of hers is designedly suppressed; she is wholly and completely the pure, innocent maiden, whose love is to spell her doom. To be sure, Apollonius could not do without the other Medea — the wild, passionate sorceress; her he uses for certain scenes in the homeward voyage, and thus in the fourth book we are introduced to a Medea whose character contrasts sharply with that portrayed in the third book.

Apollonius must himself have sensed this cleavage in the character of Medea; he indicates as much in the proem to the fourth book:

Now take thou up the story, O Goddess of Song, and sing
The afflictions and thoughts of the Kolchian maid; for as
touching this thing

In a tempest of wilderment whirled is my soul, that I know not to say
Whether from bitter infatuate passion she fled away
From the land of the Kolchian folk, or driven of panic dismay.

— A. S. Way [54]

Of all the books, the fourth is the longest and the richest in material; it contains also individual scenes of great effectiveness. It lacks, however, that inner unity which is characteristic of the third book above the others.

The goal is not yet attained: the Golden Fleece is not yet won. It does not occur to Aeetes to keep his promise; he suspects his daughter's treason and contemplates revenge. Medea is oppressed by a feeling of guilt and is again near suicide, but is restrained by Hera and determines to fly to the Argonauts:

And she kissed her bed, and her hands on the walls with loving caress
Lingered: she kissed the posts of the doors; and one long tress
She severed, and left it her bower within, for her mother to be
A memorial of maidenhood's days, and with passionate voice moaned she:
'This tress in my own stead leave I, or ever I go, unto thee,

[54] From *The Tale of the Argonauts*, by A. S. Way. Reprinted by permission of Messrs. J. M. Dent and Sons.

My mother; and, far though I wend, yet take farewell from me!
Farewell thou, Chalkiopê, and mine home! — Would God that the wave,
Ere thou cam'st to the Kolchian land, O stranger, had yawned for thy grave! '
So spake she, and down from her eyelids in floods the teardrops ran.

— A. S. Way [55]

The unexpected conclusion surprises us. Her love for Jason seems extinguished, her liaison with him only a misfortune. This impression is strengthened by a scornful speech of the moon-goddess on the maiden's flight to the Argo, a flight purposely fitted with all manner of weird apparatus. With scathing cruelty the goddess declares that a malevolent demon has sent Jason to Medea for her doom. Medea's greeting of the hero is distant and cold, therefore, when she has found the Argo in the darkness of night, and Jason and the two sons of Phrixus have leaped to the shore at her cry:

' Deliver me, O my friends, the hapless! — yea, and beside
Save from Aiêtes yourselves: for all hath been brought to light,
Yea, all: and there cometh no help therefor. But speed we our flight

[55] From *The Tale of the Argonauts*, by A. S. Way. Reprinted by permission of Messrs. J. M. Dent and Sons.

In your ship, ere the king shall have mounted his swift-horsed car for the chase.
And the Fleece of Gold will I give you: with slumber-spells will I daze
Its serpent warder. But thou in thy comrades' presence take
The Gods to witness the vows which thy lips, O stranger, spake
Unto me: neither make me, when hence I have fled and afar from my land,
An outcast dishonoured, as one by whose side no kinsman doth stand.'
In anguish she spake: but with gladness exceeding the heart 'gan stir
Of Aison's son. At his knees as she bowed, he uplifted her
Gently, and straightway embraced her, and spake to her words of cheer:
'Lady, let Zeus himself the Olympian my troth-plight hear;
Let Hêrê of Wedlock, the Bride of Zeus, in witness be near,
That I surely will make thee mine own true wife mine halls within
Whensoever returning again unto Hellas-land I shall win.'
He spake, and her hand with his right hand caught in the clasp of love.
Then did the maiden bid them to speed to the sacred grove
The swift ship straightway, that so, ere Aiêtes was ware, they might seize
And bear away in the darkness of night the Golden Fleece.

— A. S. Way [56]

[56] From *The Tale of the Argonauts*, by A. S. Way. Reprinted by permission of Messrs. J. M. Dent and Sons.

Through this scene Medea seems petrified. She utters no word of joy that the hero has passed successfully through his trials, no word of happiness at seeing her lover again, no delight over their permanent union; in her speech we hear only anxiety over her own safety and an almost hostile distrust of the sincerity of his promises. Even when Jason has lovingly embraced her and given his solemn oath, she does not thank him but presses on with cool energy to the business in hand. Cool, calculating resolve coupled with strong passion are henceforward the ruling traits in Medea's character. Fearlessly she lulls to sleep the terrible, raging dragon, whose horrors are painted in the liveliest colors. At her bidding Jason, who has followed her timorously — "her Jason followed in fear," it is expressly stated — tears the Fleece from the oak and carries the glittering booty to the ship, where his comrades greet him with joy. The heroes succeed in rowing the ship down the river into the sea, although Aeetes and his warriors are in pursuit along the bank. Now the king fits out a great fleet to pursue the fugitives across the sea, and threatens his Colchians with death if they do not restore his daughter to him.

Then, because the poet knew that a cult statue of Hecate, placed at the mouth of the Halys, was traced back to the Argonauts, he has the heroes land there on the third day in order to perform sacrifices to the goddess. And so it continues: every point where the learned Apollonius has discovered traces of the Argonauts or Colchians, in prose or

poetry, must be touched by the Argo in her homeward voyage. His erudition has an almost grotesque effect in the narration of the homeward route chosen by the Argonauts. At the Halys Jason recalls the advice of Phineus, not to make the return voyage through the Cyanean rocks and the Bosporus: but where was another route to be found? Here Argus comes to the rescue. In order to understand his learned proposal one must know that Herodotus had maintained, on the basis of ethnological observations, that Egyptians dwelt on the Phasis in Colchis — a remnant of the army of the world-conquering Sesostris. Apollonius takes up this thesis and has Argus say that he had seen at his home maps which the Egyptians had brought with them. These maps showed that it was possible to sail up the Ister (Danube) and, by following a fork in this stream, to reach the Adriatic. His representations are confirmed by a star sent by Hera which moves in the sky in the direction of the Ister. The Argonauts therefore sail from the Halys to the mouth of the Danube and then up the latter stream. The assumption that the Danube, at about the latitude of the mouth of the Save, divided into an easterly arm flowing into the Black Sea and a southwesterly arm flowing into the Adriatic, was quite in accord with the geographical views of the time of Apollonius. Geographers in Alexandria particularly tended toward the assumption of bifurcations in streams, since they possessed in the delta of the Nile the classic example of extreme bifurcation.

Meanwhile the Colchian pursuers divided their forces. One half of their fleet sailed through the Bosporus into the Aegean. The other, under the leadership of Medea's brother Apsyrtus, chose the route up the Danube, as did the Argonauts. The Colchians used a different mouth of the stream, however, and therefore reached the river before the Argonauts. As the Argonauts now sail down the arm of the Danube which leads to the Adriatic, the Colchians block their way at the mouth. A conflict with a superior enemy seems hopeless, and so the Argonauts consent to make a treaty. They are to retain possession of the Golden Fleece, for Aeetes had promised it as their reward for satisfactory completion of Jason's labors. Medea, however, shall be exposed on an island of the sea sacred to Artemis till a just king shall decide whether she is to return to her paternal home or continue on the voyage with the Argonauts. This plan is opposed by Medea in a passionate speech to Jason:

'O Aison's son, what purpose is this that now ye devise
Touching me? Hath thy triumph brought utter forgetfulness
unto thee?
Dost thou nothing regard thy promises, all that thou spakest
to me
In stress of thy need? Where now are the oaths of the Suppliants' King
Zeus? — and thine honied promises, whither have these
taken wing?
By reason of these, in unseemly wise, with passion unshamed

I forsook my fatherland home, and the glory of halls far-famed,
Yea, and my parents — all that was most unto me; and I sail
Far over the sea alone, where the plaintive sea-mews wail,
Because of thy trouble, that I might redeem from destruction thy life
To accomplish the fire-bulls' quelling, the Earth-born giants' strife.
Yea, and the very Fleece, for the which ye had sailed to our shore,
All by my folly ye won. Foul shame thereby did I pour
On womankind! Wherefore, I say, as thy daughter, thy wife, I stand,
Yea, and thy sister, who follow thee back unto Hellas-land.
Oh now with purpose of heart stand by me, neither forsake me
Afar and forlorn of thee, to the gathering of kings to betake thee!
But in any wise save me; and sealed abide thy solemn vow,
Which is plighted, by justice of man and of God; or else do thou
Shear, of thy pity, this my throat with thy falchion through,
That so for my frenzied love I may reap the guerdon due.
O heartless! — if that he doom that my brother's prey I remain,
This king unto whose stern judgment ye now would commit, ye twain,
Your cruel covenant, how shall I come to my father's sight?
With glory in sooth! — what revenges, what devilish torment will light

Upon me! — what agony-cup shall I drain for the dreadful deed
That I wrought! Oh, never think that in bliss your return shall speed!
Ne'er may the World's Queen, bride of Zeus, accomplish for thee —
She in whom thou delightest — this! Then may'st thou remember me
When anguish-racked: may the Fleece like a dream fleet away from thine hand
Down the wind to the netherworld-gloom! Be thou chased from thy fatherland
By the Spirits of Vengeance for me, even after the measure of all
That through thy betrayal I suffered! That earthward my curses should fall
Unaccomplished, shall God forbid; for a great oath thou hast transgressed,
O ruthless! Not long, for all this covenant-plight, at rest
From your troubles, on me shall ye wink with the eye, to make me your jest.'
So spake she, seething with vehement rage: fierce-eager was she
To fire the ship, and to hew it in pieces utterly,
And to hurl herself mid the ravening flame. . . .

— A. S. Way [57]

Here it is quite the Euripidean Medea that speaks, despising the man she once loved. She seeks to hold him, but only

[57] From *The Tale of the Argonauts*, by A. S. Way. Reprinted by permission of Messrs. J. M. Dent and Sons.

because she needs him. She reminds him that all his great deeds are in truth her work, and openly threatens revenge for his base ingratitude. In this scene Jason is also more reminiscent of the wretched egoist of Euripides than of the worthy man of honor that Apollonius describes elsewhere. He seeks to assuage her anger, emphasizes the danger and advises craft. Medea receives this suggestion in wrathful calm. She declares, without hesitation, that her brother Apsyrtus must be lured to a conference with her by gifts and treacherous words; then Jason is treacherously to murder him.

The poet himself senses the repulsiveness of this base betrayal and with impetuous words charges Eros with being its author — a charge which in fact is entirely baseless. As a piece of description the gruesome scene is very effective — how the lad is lured by gifts, promises, and his sister's incantations to the island of Artemis and there slain:

And now that hero, deathward-beguiled by their promise dread,
Over the swell of the sea in his galley swiftly sped,
And under the mirk night stepped on the Isle of the Holy Place,
And alone fared onward to meet his sister face to face,
And to try her with words, — as though some tender child should try
A wintertide torrent, when strong men may not cross thereby! —

If perchance she would weave him a treachery-snare for the stranger-crew,
And now were they making agreement for all these things, they two,
When suddenly out of the gloom of his ambush the Aisonid leapt
Uplifting his naked sword in his hand: and the maiden swept
Her veil o'er her eyes, as she turned them away for averting of guilt
That she might not behold the blood of her slaughtered brother spilt,
And him, as a flesher felleth a strong-horned bull, even so
Did he mark him, and smite him, hard by the fane which long ago
The Brygians which dwelt on the mainland-shore unto Artemis wrought.
In the porchway thereof on his knees he fell; and the hero caught
In his hands, as he gasped his latest breath, the dark-red tide
As it welled from the gash, and he hurled that murder-rain, that it dyed
Crimson her silver veil and her robe, as she shrank aside.
And with swift side-glance the all-quelling Vengeance-fiend espied,
And her pitiless eye beheld that murderous deed they had done.
But the ends of the dead man's limbs then severed Aison's son:
Thrice licked he the blood from the sod, thrice spat it again to the dust,

As the slayer must do that atonement be made for the
treachery-thrust.
Then hid he the clammy corpse in the ground, where unto
this day
In the land of Absyrtan men be those bones lapped in clay.
— A. S. Way [58]

The close of the passage dealing with the grave among the Apsyrtians is again a piece of learned pedantry which we could gladly be spared. Nevertheless it is to his knowledge of folklore that the poet is indebted for the cannibal rites of atonement for the murder which so effectively crown the gruesomeness of the scene. No similar tradition is extant from the sphere of Greek culture; but parallels occur among primitive peoples.

After the death of Apsyrtus the crew of his ship is massacred by the Argonauts. They then break through the rest of the fleet of the unsuspecting Colchians and make for the isle of Electris, near the mouth of the Eridanus (Po). Through threatening portents, Hera restrains the Colchians from pursuing further. Since on account of their fear of Aeetes they do not dare to return without Medea, they settle in the Apsyrtian isles and in Illyria. Thus the poet successfully disposes of one part of the Colchians. It is harder for him to motivate the further wanderings of the Argo. He himself feels the difficulty of bringing them to

[58] From *The Tale of the Argonauts*, by A. S. Way. Reprinted by permission of Messrs. J. M. Dent and Sons.

the regions of the Western Mediterranean where traces of the Argonauts were known; he gives expression to his embarrassment in an invocation to the Muses:

Now, Goddesses, tell how Argo's wondrous ensign came
Without this sea, by Ausonia-land, and the isles men name
The 'Long Row,' lone sea-cradles that nurse a Ligurian seed —
How stood clear forth mid-sea — what strong constraint, what need
Thitherward led her, what breezes they were that wafted her speed.

— A. S. Way [59]

Naturally the Muses know the answer. Zeus is wroth at the murder of Apsyrtus and makes atonement through Circe, sister of Aeetes, a necessary condition of their homecoming. The unsuspecting heroes then sail along the Illyrian coast and are already in view of the Ceraunian mountains when Hera, who is privy to Zeus's counsels, sends a storm which drives them back to the isle of Electris in the mouth of the Po. The speaking beam which Athena had fitted into the Argo reveals Zeus's decrees to the despondent heroes, and they therefore sail up the Eridanus (Po). And now the geographic imagination of the poet blossoms out even more remarkably than in connection with the Ister. Beguiled by the similar sound of the names Eridanus and Rhodanus and

[59] From *The Tale of the Argonauts*, by A. S. Way. Reprinted by permission of Messrs. J. M. Dent and Sons.

supported by a dim knowledge of an extensive lake country in the distant North, he has the Argo reach the Rhodanus (Rhone) through the Eridanus. According to Apollonius, the Rhodanus is divided, in the interior of the Celtic mainland, into three arms: the first flows into the Adriatic as the Eridanus, the second, as the Rhodanus, into the Sardinian sea, the third, towards the North, into the ocean. When the Argonauts came into the stormy lakes where the three streams branch off, they would have turned up the northerly arm into the ocean had not Hera shouted mightily from the Hercynian rock and guided them into the southerly arm. Greek geography possessed as yet no knowledge whatever of the Alps; on the other hand, Aristotle had heard of the Hercynian Mountains, and Timaeus locates the sources of the Danube among them. There can be no doubt [60] that the Black Forest is intended by the Hercynian Mountains, the Lake of Geneva and the Lake of Constance by the stormy seas, and the Rhine by the arm of the Rhone which flows toward the ocean. It is all, to be sure, extraordinarily distorted. Nevertheless, there is for us a certain charm in the thought of Hera calling from the Black Forest, near Waldshut perhaps, to the Argo as it sailed down the Rhine.

Uneventfully the Argonauts then sail down the Rhone into the Ligurian sea, touch at the Stoechades and the island Aethalia (Elba), where an "Argo harbor" was shown,

[60] See J. Partsch, *Sitzungsber. d. Sächs. Akad.*, Vol. LXXI (1919), Fasc. 2, p. 11.

and then arrive at Aeaea, the island of Circe. For the succeeding portion of their wanderings the rule obtains that the Argonauts must experience all the dangers and miracles which Odysseus had to undergo: Circe, Aeolus, the Sirens, the Wandering rocks (Planctae), Scylla, Charybdis, the Oxen of the Sun, the land of the Phaeacians — the whole story is repeated; but it is all sketched in so different a manner and with such different shading that the old familiar figures are endowed with new faces. This recasting of celebrated legends had a peculiar charm for Apollonius' audience, and he himself thought it very important. Jason and Medea go to Circe unaccompanied, seat themselves at the hearth silently and with downcast eyes, and the enchantress purges them by a solemn sacrifice. Medea then relates in the Colchian tongue the whole chain of their adventures to her father's sister; only about the murder of Apsyrtus is she silent. But the enchantress perceives the deception. With harsh words, she charges her with fratricide, threatens her with punishment from her father, and thrusts her weeping from her threshold. Here the poet inserts another extensive scene in which gods figure. Hera dispatches Iris, first to Thetis to summon her to herself, then to Hephaestus to bid him forsake his smithy on the Liparian Islands until the Argo shall have sailed past Sicily, then to Aeolus to bid him permit Zephyrus only of all the winds to be in motion, so that the Argo may safely reach the land of the Phaeacians. Piquantly charming is the conversation between Hera and

Thetis. After many affectionate greetings, for Thetis had withstood Zeus's wooing and had married Peleus, best of mortal heroes, Hera informs her that it is the decree of fate that in the future Thetis' son, Achilles, is to wed Medea in the Islands of the Blessed — a version of the legend already handled by Ibycus and Simonides. Therefore let her abandon her grudge against her husband, Peleus, and come to the aid of her future daughter-in-law, Medea, as becomes a proper mother-in-law. Let her and her sisters, the Nereids, conduct the Argo through the Wandering rocks and between Scylla and Charybdis. Thetis consents and quickly informs her husband, who had not seen her since the night he had unwittingly disturbed the goddess as she was purifying her son, Achilles, in the flame to render him immortal. In good spirits the Argonauts set sail from the island of Circe. The mighty Zephyr drives their ship past the Sirens, whose enticing song is drowned out by Orpheus' lyre and thereby rendered harmless. Only one of the Argonauts, Butes, leaps into the sea to swim to the Sirens, but he is saved by Cypris to dwell on the Lilybean promontory. But other perils still more terrible await the Argonauts, in Scylla, Charybdis, and the Wandering rocks. These last are, in fact, doublets of the clashing Cyanean rocks, which belong to the oldest stock of the Argonaut saga. Since Homer mentions them in the *Odyssey*, along with the Sirens and Scylla and Charybdis, specifically in relation to the Argo, Apollonius could not well omit them; one may clearly note, how-

ever, that they cause him great inconvenience. The poet's treatment is defective because their relation to Scylla and Charybdis is not made clear, but Apollonius deceives the reader in regard to this defect by his glittering description of how Thetis and her sisters assist the Argo through the perils of the straits:

Then Nereus' daughters from this side and that side the heroes met,
And Thetis the Goddess her hand to the blade of the rudder set;
And onward amidst the Wandering Rocks the ship haled they.
And as when o'er the face of a summer sea the dolphins play
Circling around a ship as she runneth before the wind,
One while in front of her stern beheld, one while behind,
And alongside anon: and the shipmen be blithe for their gambolling;
So darted they up from the depths, so circled, a glimmering ring,
Round Argo the ship; and Thetis was steering her course through all.
And when now was the galley at point on the Wandering Rocks to fall,
Straightway they kilted their skirts above their snowy knees,
And high on the crests of the skerries, the breaking of madding seas,
To this side and that side they sped, far ranged apart to stand.
Sea-cataracts crashed on her beam, fierce surges on either hand

Higher upsoaring and higher o'er the rocks were bursting and streaming;
And these now towered to the welkin, as mountain-crags in seeming,
And now, whelmed down the abyss, on the Ocean's nethermost floor
Grounded they: over their crests did the triumphing rollers roar.
But the Nereïds, as maidens that flit to and fro on a sandy beach,
With parted gown-laps kilted about the waist of each,
Sport with a shapely rounded ball: one tosseth it on,
And her fellow receiveth; and high 'twixt heaven and earth is it gone
Sped from her hand to the welkin; and never it toucheth the ground,
So from one unto other's hand passed on did the galley bound
Through the air o'er the crests of the waves as they sped her, clear alway
Of the rocks; and around her the water upbelching was seething aye.
And the Fire-king's self on the ridge of a surf-lashed scaur was there,
While his sturdy hammer the weight of his massy shoulder bare.
Thence marvelling gazed Hephaistus: the bride of Zeus looked down
Where she stood in the sunlit heaven, and round Athênê had thrown
Her arms, in such faintness of fear, as she looked thereon, did she cling.

And long as the space of a day is lengthened out in the spring,
So long was the time that they laboured, heaving with might and main
The ship through the thunderous-echoing rocks, till the wind again
Blew out the canvas; and onward they ran, and swiftly they sped
By the meads of Thrinakria's isle, where the kine of the Sun-god fed.
Then the Nymphs in the semblance of sea-mews down through abysses of brine
Plunged, when wrought was the hest of Zeus's Bride divine.
— A. S. Way [61]

The plastic charm of this scene and its great effectiveness, fitted as it is with all the trappings of baroque art, are on a level hardly reached again in Apollonius' poem. Here the gods have the same grandeur as on the frieze of the altar at Pergamum.

But the tone of the narrative soon sinks again. When the Argonauts have received a most cordial welcome on the isle of the Phaeacians (Corfu), that party of the Colchian pursuers which had sailed through the Cyanean rocks suddenly appears and threateningly demands the restoration of Medea. Alcinous seeks to intervene, and Medea very skillfully and effectively arouses the sympathy first of Queen Arete and

[61] From *The Tale of the Argonauts*, by A. S. Way. Reprinted by permission of Messrs. J. M. Dent and Sons.

then of the individual Argonauts. And now comes a most charming bedroom scene. In bed at night Arete employs all the little wiles at the disposal of a clever wife to persuade her husband to save Medea from being delivered to her pursuers. Alcinous is not disinclined to yield, but he is led by conscience to the following decision, which he means to deliver to the contending parties on the following morning: if Medea is still a maiden, she belongs to her father and must therefore be delivered to the Colchians; if, on the other hand, her union with Jason has already been consummated, she belongs to her husband, and may not be taken from him. After delivering this Solomon-like judgment, the honest king goes to sleep peacefully. His clever wife, however, has learned from Medea herself that she is still a maiden. Gently she rises from her marriage bed and sends a faithful messenger to the Argonauts to inform them of the impending judgment of the king. The messenger finds the heroes in a cave. There the marriage is quickly prepared. The Golden Fleece serves as a bridal couch; it is decked with flowers by nymphs of the region, sent by Hera; and the heroes chant the epithalamium for the bridal pair to the accompaniment of Orpheus' lyre. When on the following morning Alcinous solemnly pronounces his decision, the marriage has already been consummated and the Colchians must grudgingly retire. The story of a woman's successful wit, reminiscent of an Ionic tale told with such gusto by Herodotus, is the last high point in the poem.

However, the wanderings of the Argo are not yet ended. The sailors are already in view of the Peloponnesus when a storm arises from the North and drives them to the African Syrtis, from whose shallow, marshy waters it is impossible to sail out. In despair the heroes see facing them an ignoble death by starvation, when Libyan heroine-nymphs approach Jason and in a vague oracle inform him of the possibility of salvation:

> . . . so soon as the steeds of the car swift-wheeled
> Of Poseidon, by Amphitritê loosed from the yoke, run free.
> Unto your mother the nursing-debt then render ye
> For all her travail, when long she bare you her womb within.
> So haply again unto hallowed Achaia-land shall ye win.
>
> — A. S. Way [62]

Jason is baffled by the extraordinary oracle, as are his despairing comrades. When a gigantic horse rises out of the sea and rushes landward, Peleus discovers the solution. The horse is the chariot of Poseidon; the mother who has so long borne them is the Argo; it is the Argo they must now drag overland. And so it comes to pass, though the poet himself protests he would never have credited it had he not the Muses' authority for it. For twelve days and nights the mighty heroes draw their craft overland to the Tritonian lake. Here they find the serpent of the Hesperides, the

[62] From *The Tale of the Argonauts*, by A. S. Way. Reprinted by permission of Messrs. J. M. Dent and Sons.

guardian of the golden apples, at the point of death; only the tip of its tail still quivers with life. It was only on the preceding day that Heracles had slain it and carried off the golden apples. At the approach of the heroes the Hesperides, who are sitting about mournfully, crumble into dust. They arise again, however, in the form of trees, and at Orpheus' entreaty one of them informs the Argonauts of Heracles' deed, and shows them a fountain, furthermore, which the thirsty hero had smitten out of the rock. I pass over a series of unrelated stories that are loosely inserted. Suffice it that Triton shows them the passage from the Tritonian lake. As their journey to Hellas continues, several more adventures take place. Of these the best known is that of the bronze giant Talos at Crete. From the ship the giant is slain by an incantation of Medea and the destructive glance from her " evil " eye. Clearly the poet wishes to show Medea once more in the splendor of her magic power; for since the adventures on the island of the Phaeacians she had fallen quite into the background. A chain of minor aetiological legends carries the Argonauts to Aegina; here the poet suddenly takes his leave of them and the work is at an end:

Be gracious, O blest generation of chieftains! — may these lays ring
Year after year in the ears of men ever sweeter to sing!
For now at the last am I come to the glorious ending of all,
To the bourne of your travail: for struggle nor strife did thereafter befall

Unto you, as homeward-bound from Aigina did Argo flee,
Neither tempest of winds brake forth; but over a peaceful sea
By the land of Kekrops, by Aulis coasting, and under the lee
Of Eubœa, by cities Opuntian of Lokrian men did ye fleet,
Till with rapture of welcome on Pagasae's strand ye set your feet.

— A. S. Way [63]

It were hard to find another great epic whose close is so dull and ineffective. We are not told what becomes of Jason and Medea or what becomes of the Golden Fleece. The heroes disembark on their native heath, and therewith the poet has completed his task. This ending illustrates very clearly the great defect of the entire poem, namely, the want of structural unity. Externally, to be sure, the voyage of the Argonauts from departure to return forms a unity; there is, however, no internal unity. The poet did not succeed in molding into a unified whole the abundant and erudite material which he had gathered. True, the events follow one after the other, but they do not proceed one out of the other. Only seldom does the poet succeed in binding together considerable masses of material by means of significant motifs. The prophecy of Phineus and the anger of Zeus over the murder of Apsyrtus are merely exceptions. The weakness in structure becomes particularly painful when we compare it with the magnificent and artistic composition of the *Odyssey*.

[63] From *The Tale of the Argonauts*, by A. S. Way. Reprinted by permission of Messrs. J. M. Dent and Sons.

Fundamentally worse is another fault. The poet has no way of life to set before men of his own period. His characters are not ideals to be emulated. His relation to the heroic period is not one of credulous admiration but often rather of coolly critical superiority. How different is Vergil's way! It was ever Vergil's lofty aim to create a national epic for his people. The voyages and struggles of *pius Aeneas* were calculated to demonstrate to his audience what true Roman virtues were; after the model of these heroes his hearers were to shape their own lives. The fact that Vergil set this aim before him, and in fact achieved it as fully as the exigencies of his period permitted is the indisputable basis of the superiority of the *Aeneid* over the *Argonautica*. The effort of Apollonius certainly did not reach such a level that he could think of his work as a complement to the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. The towering shade of Homer ever gazed over his shoulder.

But if he did not attain, nay, hardly strove after, the highest service that a poet could render his people, he must, none the less, be highly esteemed. We certainly cannot dismiss him as a later imitator of Homer. Zealously as he studied his model, his paths, in all artistic respects, diverge widely from those of Homer and the cyclic poets. In spite of Homeric inflectional forms, his language is so different from that of Homer that not a single line could stand unaltered in Homer. He studiously avoids the comfortable use of the habitual expressions which the older

epic employs for transitions and frequently recurring situations, such as the coming of day and night, greeting and farewell, meals and sacrifices. He eschews the use of the formulae and the repetitious verses. He seeks ever to individualize, to satisfy the peculiar character of each situation by means of new approaches. Amazingly rich, for example, is the wealth of shading which he expends upon the appearance of morning and of night. Similarly he avoids the hackneyed epithets which occur automatically in the older epic at the mention of certain gods and heroes. Quite modern and very deft, furthermore, is his handling of the hexameter, even though his verse does not quite attain the severity of that of Callimachus.

Modern too is his striving after psychological intensity and the dissection of emotions; I need recall only the representation of the struggle in the soul of Medea. His creative imagination is by no means poor. When he draws from his own resources, the stream of his inventiveness flows stronger and fresher than that of his Roman rival: instances are the persuasion of Eros by Aphrodite and the saving of the Argo by the Nereids. The trait which often destroys his effectiveness, his desire to employ all the scholarly erudition which he had accumulated in his laborious studies, is thoroughly Alexandrian. To our view, with his virtues and his failings, he stands infinitely closer to the circle of Callimachus than to the Homeric epic or to the Hesiodic catalogue poetry, which had gone to seed. One almost wonders

how Callimachus and his followers could so positively reject a poet who had so much in common with them. But in literature, when once struggles of theory are set on foot, elements of disparity are always more keenly felt by contemporaries than are common elements.

The centuries following did not confirm Callimachus' judgment. Apollonius was much read and commented upon. In the age of Caesar a Roman, Terentius Varro Atacinus, translated him into Latin. In the Flavian period Valerius Flaccus produced a free version, of which we have extant the entire portion which was completed. The Egyptian papyri, of which eight have now been discovered, show that Egyptian Greeks in the imperial period esteemed the poet highly. One of the fragments is dated as late as the seventh century. Apollonius thus belongs to the small company of Alexandrian poets who have been preserved for us in excellent medieval manuscripts and with rich commentaries — a fate which was denied the chief works of his rival, Callimachus.

Apollonius' example found imitators, but not one of the other heroic epics of which we have mention achieved enduring success. We should probably be most interested in the *Messeniaca* of Rhianus, a Cretan who composed this and a number of other epics toward the close of the third century. We gain some notion of the character of this poem from its use by Pausanias, the Greek Baedeker, in his account of Messenian history.

The hero of this epic was a champion of Messenian liberty, Aristomenes, who, about 500 B.C., again made an attempt to free his unhappy country from the Spartan yoke. This genuinely historical personage, whose significance was scarcely greater than that of a modern leader of a Cretan or Albanian band, is now transformed into another Achilles. In Pausanias' account there is discernible a series of romantic heroic traits with which the poet adorned him. Aristomenes has fallen into captivity, and is set free by a priestess of Demeter, who had loved him previously. Captured a second time, he is hurled, along with other Messenians, into a deep pit, but he is carried downward by an eagle on its wings, so that he is the only one who reaches the bottom of the pit unhurt. For two days he lies in the pit in despair, awaiting death; but on the third, he sees a jackal gnaw at the corpses of the dead. He seizes the jackal and lets himself be dragged to the narrow hole through which the beast had made its way into the ravine. He then works his way through and appears again quite unexpectedly at the mountain fortress Ira. On another occasion he is bound with thongs and taken by Cretan archers to a lonely farmstead where a widow lives with her daughter. During the previous night the maiden had dreamt that wolves had brought her a lion without claws, that she had returned the claws to it, and that it had then mangled the wolves. She perceives that the dream refers to Aristomenes, makes his guards drunk, cuts his bonds, and returns his sword to

him. Thereupon the hero naturally slays his drunken guards, and makes his way to his own people. Out of gratitude he marries the girl to his own son, Gorgus. The eventual collapse of the revolution, however, cannot be ignored by the poet. When Aristomenes perceives through divine omens that all further resistance is vain, he and the remnant of his band fight their way out. At Delphi, through an oracle of the Pythia, he wins a noble Rhodian, Damagetus,[64] as son-in-law and goes with him to Rhodes, where he dies and is buried with high honors. Although it cannot be established exactly how great was Pausanias' indebtedness to Rhianus, it is nevertheless clear that two romantic motifs, love and robbery, were much used by Rhianus. In all probability Rhianus' epic resembled one of Julius Wolff's cantos much more closely than it did the *Iliad*. The slight remains which we have of the actual text of Rhianus' poems are in a lucid and simple language, and show neither affectation nor pedantry.

b) Didactic Poetry

It is hard for us to realize the high esteem which didactic poetry enjoyed in Hellenistic times. This branch is practically as old as Greek poetry generally. Hesiod's chief purpose is to teach, and this purpose stands out so prominently

[64] A son of this Damagetus was Diagoras, a famous athlete who was victor at Olympia in 464 and was celebrated by Pindar in the seventh Olympian ode.

in the *Works and Days* that later antiquity generally considered this work the ideal model of a didactic poem. In the earlier period, to be sure, the didactic was not felt to be a separate branch of poetry. Even in *The Frogs* of Aristophanes the belief that poets are the divinely appointed teachers of the people prevails over the conception of poetry as an end in itself: every poet is a teacher and every poem must teach. So Homer was celebrated for centuries primarily as the teacher of his people. But when poets ceased to be the only teachers of the people, when philosophers took their place beside them and delivered their teachings in language unfettered by meter, didactic poetry gradually diverged from the other forms. A small group of the older philosophers in the second half of the sixth century and the first half of the fifth, the Ionian Xenophanes of Colophon and the western Greeks that followed him, Parmenides and Empedocles, used the epic form to proclaim their teachings concerning the most abstruse philosophical problems, apparently because this form seemed to them a worthier medium for their lofty speculations than did the still undeveloped Ionian prose. The poetic gift cannot well be denied to Xenophanes and Empedocles, but the wooden lines of Parmenides betray only too clearly that they are not the proper form for his abstract speculations. It became obvious to all who bestowed any serious thought on the subject that these philosophical poems were something other than what is commonly understood as poetry, and so the great art

critic Aristotle uncompromisingly excludes them from the realm of poetry. In the first chapter of his *Poetics* he states that it is incorrect to classify as an epic poet everyone who employs epic meter: "Even if a treatise on a medical or scientific subject be produced in verse, the title of poet is customarily given to the author. But Homer and Empedocles have nothing in common except the meter; it is proper therefore to denominate the former as a poet, but the latter is scientist rather than poet."

This rejection by Aristotle of didactic poetry made no impression on the Hellenistic aesthetes. It may even have incited them to show that poetic qualities could be developed even in the treatment of the driest material. All the older Hellenistic poets were scholars; they put a high value upon knowledge as such, and it seemed to them quite consistent with the function of the poet that he set it as his goal to make scholarly information accessible to wider circles by casting it into poetic form. They could cite the example of Hesiod, whom Aristotle had overlooked in his *Poetics*, but who had always been considered one of the first of Hellenic poets. The Hellenists deliberately made Hesiod equal, if not superior, to Homer.

The same Callimachus who waged such passionate war against emulation of Homer and consequently denounced every attempt at the heroic epic considered a renascence of Hesiodic poetry feasible and full of promise. He greets with a flattering epigram the first and most success-

ful of the Hellenistic didactic poems, the *Phaenomena* of Aratus:

> Both song and style are Hesiod's: Soli's son
> Copied not our best minstrel, but has won
> Certes! his sweetest verse. Fine sayings, hail!
> Born with night watchings of Aratus pale.
> —R. G. MacGregor

This homage carries the more weight in that Aratus did not belong to the circle of poets grouped about the Alexandrian Museum.

Aratus was a contemporary of Callimachus, perhaps an older contemporary, and was descended from a respectable family of Soli, a Greek city of Cilicia. With his brother Athenodorus he went to Athens to study. Both brothers joined the philosopher Zeno, who had at that time founded the Stoic school. Although Aratus' connection with the Stoa does not appear to have been as intimate as that of his brother, its influence on both his inner and his outer life is yet of great importance. It was probably at the recommendation of Zeno that he was invited to Pella to the court of the Macedonian king Antigonus Gonatas, who was devoted to Stoic teaching. Here he recommended himself at once by a hymn to the god Pan, to whom Antigonus ascribed his brilliant victory over the Galatians in the year 277. It is said that it was also at the king's behest that he composed his principal work, the *Phaenomena*. Macedonia

appears to have become his second home; we hear also of a stay at the court of the Syrian King Antiochus.

Aratus was a versatile nature; his wealth of knowledge is praised by Callimachus in a prose writing. A purely scholarly work was his critical edition of the *Odyssey*, which he, probably, composed in his later years. To the period of his youth, on the other hand, surely belongs a collection of short poems, of which two epigrams have come down to us. The one bemoans in mocking vein the fate of Diotimus, probably a schoolfellow, who wound up as an elementary teacher in a hill town of Asia Minor:

> I mourn for Diotimus, who, upon a bleak rock set
> Teaches the young in Gargara their endless alphabet.
> — R. G. MacGregor

We hear of other poetical works of Aratus, aside from the *Hymn to Pan*, but his poetic reputation rests exclusively on his great didactic poem on astronomy, the *Phaenomena*.

The poet's relation to his material is quite different from that of the older philosophic didactic poets. These earlier writers were impelled by an irresistible desire to make their new discoveries known to the world. They were indifferent to the poetic form and chose it only because thus they hoped to speak more effectively. Aratus, on the other hand, had no new wisdom of his own to spread abroad. He simply took his material from a learned prose work of Eudoxus of Cnidus; his own astronomical training was so slight that

he often failed to understand his source correctly. Even his ancient commentators noticed these errors, and Cicero could remark pointedly, indicating that it was a well-known fact, that Aratus, " who knew nothing of astronomy," composed an excellent poem on the starry heavens. Aratus, none the less, was steeped in the greatness and importance of his subject, and this inner warmth of feeling doubtless contributed largely to the success of his poem. His purpose was to introduce to wider circles the majesty of the starry heavens through skillful poetic treatment, and in the attainment of this purpose he succeeded in an extraordinary degree.

The introduction breathes a genuinely poetic atmosphere; following the Stoic conceptions, it celebrates Zeus as the embodiment of the eternal world order. Here Aratus surely had a model in the *Hymn to Zeus* by Cleanthes, his fellow Stoic, a model which he used without quite comprehending its depth.

Let us begin with Zeus, the power we mortals never leave
Unsaluted. Zeus fills all the city streets,
All the nations' crowded marts; fills the watery deeps
And havens; every labour needs the aid of Zeus.
His children are we. He benignant
Raises high signals, summoning man to toil,
And warning him of life's demands: tells when the sod is fittest
For oxen and harrows; tells the auspicious hours
For planting the sapling and casting every seed.

'Twas he who set the beacons in the sky,
And grouped the stars, and formed the annual round
Of constellations, to mark unerringly
The days when labour is crowned first with increase.
Him therefore men propitiate first and last.
Hail, father, mighty marvel! hail! mighty benefactor!
Thyself and those who begot thee! And ye too, Muses,
Gracious influences, hail! and while I essay to tell of skies
What mortal may tell, guide right my wandering lay.

— E. Poste [65]

This outpouring of a piety conceived in purely philosophic colors can be appreciated by a modern reader, but the poem itself will for the most part afford us but little enjoyment. Aratus begins with the constellation of the Great Bear, so important to sailors and peasants, and then describes constellation after constellation, with the closest fidelity to the chart of Eudoxus, which was sketched on the inner side of a metal hemisphere. It is impossible to follow the poet without constant reference to a chart, and even with the chart in hand I have personally been able to find my way only with the greatest difficulty. Myths of the stars find their way into this pure description only sparingly and in quite brief form. The one related with greatest detail is that of Dike, the goddess of justice, who forsook the earth in the Age of Bronze and is now enthroned in heaven as the con-

[65] From *The Skies and Weather-Forecasts of Aratus*, by E. Poste. Copyright 1880, by The Macmillan Company. Reprinted by permission.

stellation Virgo. Aratus borrowed the elements of the myth from the *Works and Days* of Hesiod, but he effected many changes and worked in some Empedoclean ideas. I shall cite at least the show piece of this poem, which is so strange to us:

Below the Waggoner's feet
Lo the Virgin, in her hand a glittering ear of corn.
Whether born of Astræus, whom they call
The old sire of heaven, or from whomsoever sprung,
Her favour be upon us. The story runs,
That earth was once her home,
And that she mixed in human throngs, nor ever shunned
Society of man or woman of olden times;
But sate among them, immortal though she were,
And bore the name of Justice: and summoning the elders
In solemn senate or wide market-place,
She sang in thrilling strains the notes of equal law.
As yet they knew not baleful strife
Nor parted interests' bitter feud nor battle;
But lived a life all unalloyed, far from the dangerous sea,
And no ships brought their food from foreign lands;
But oxen and the plough and throned Justice
Yielded ten thousandfold to all their needs, with distribution due.
These things were when earth nurtured the golden race.
The silver race she visited more rarely with somewhat altered mood,
No longer finding the spirits of former days:
Yet she consorted with the silver race.
At eve she would come from the echoing mountains

Uncompanioned, nor had she gentle words for any:
But when she hill-ward drew the thronging crowds,
Her voice was stern, upbraiding their crimes.
No more, said she, at their invocations would she meet them face to face.
'How base a progeny sprang from golden sires!
And viler shall they be whom ye beget,
And wars shall break forth, and unholy blood
Stain the earth, and sin bring penal woe.'
After such speech she would hie mountain-ward, and leave the human tribes
Straining eager gaze on her retiring form.
But when that generation died, and there was born
A brazen generation, more pernicious than their sires,
Who forged the felon sword
For hostile foray, and tasted the blood of the ox that drew the plough,
Justice, loathing that race of men,
Winged her flight to heaven; and fixed her station in that region
Where still by night is seen
The Virgin goddess, near to bright Bootes.

— E. Poste [66]

The description of the fixed constellations consumes quite half the entire poem. The planets are dispensed with in a few verses. Again in detail are treated the constellations rising and setting together and the signs of the Zodiac. The

[66] From *The Skies and Weather-Forecasts of Aratus*, by E. Poste. Copyright, 1880, by The Macmillan Company. Reprinted by permission.

last third contains the Weather Signs, for us moderns probably the most comprehensible portion of the work. Here the poet does not in any wise confine himself to the heavenly bodies. On the stars, sun, moon, clouds, many remarks are made which are in part current among us today as signs of the weather — for example, the halo of the moon, the formation of the clouds, and the radiation of the setting sun. But in addition he has numerous weather signs derived from animal life and from objects used by man. The behavior of all sorts of birds, of oxen, sheep, goats, mice, dogs, tree frogs, wasps, ants and worms furnishes weather signs. Even trees and garden plants are brought in, as well as the flame of lamps and coal fires. The portion devoted to weather signs could not have been taken from the astronomical work of Eudoxus; the poet is here apparently following a Peripatetic source. The practical utility of the instruction for peasants and sailors justifies the inclusion of this material, which is really an appendix differing from the body of the poem in character and in execution.

The success of the poem was unexampled. The laudatory epigram of Callimachus was outdone by another, by Leonidas of Tarentum. Leonidas shows lamentable taste in placing our poet second only to Zeus himself, because, forsooth, he had given the stars a greater splendor. In the following centuries astronomers, philosophers, and grammarians vie with one another in treating and expounding the poem. The only work we possess from the pen of Hipparchus, the

greatest astronomer of the second century B.C., is a critical exposition of Aratus. One of the very few citations from Greek poets in the New Testament is the half verse from Aratus' introduction, "For we also are his offspring," which the author of The Acts has inserted into Paul's sermon, on the Areopagus, in Athens. In the imperial period his home city engraved the poet's likeness on its coins. The great physician Galen could say, "Who speaks of Soli except to mention Aratus and Chrysippus?" The Romans also translated and adapted our poet time and again. We possess extensive fragments of a free translation which Cicero made in his youth. Versions by the prince royal Germanicus and by Avienus (fourth century) are also extant; and we have occasional references to others. In the Middle Ages Aratus maintained his position as favorite; he was read even in those centuries which had almost lost the memory of Homer himself.

This continued popularity of Aratus is due only in a small degree to his merits as a poet. His language is lucid and simple, as far from labored pedantry, to be sure, as from triviality; his verse technique is graceful and careful. But tasteful and neat technique in verse and language have never yet assured a poet the recognition of many centuries. It is primarily the subject matter, so remote from our interests, which secured the favor of readers for so many centuries. The need for familiarity with the heavenly bodies was much more general in antiquity and in the Middle

Ages than in our own day, and nowhere could this familiarity be achieved so easily and pleasantly as through the work of Aratus. Doubtless the pseudo-science of astrology, which had not yet affected Aratus himself, but which was soon to enter upon its triumphant march through the world, helped to make knowledge of the heavenly bodies seem essential to wide circles.

Another didactic poet is frequently mentioned along with Aratus (as, for example, by Cicero), namely, Nicander of Colophon. Of his numerous didactic poems two are extant, the *Theriaca*, which treats, in something less than a thousand verses, of remedies against bites of poisonous beasts, and the somewhat shorter *Alexipharmaca*, which treats of remedies against food poisoning. If it were possible to effect exchanges in works handed down from the great stores of tradition, surely classicists would long ago have surrendered the poetry of Nicander in order to secure in exchange worthier Hellenistic works, for of all the extant Greek poetry dating from the period before Christ surely Nicander's is the least agreeable. He combines in himself the most diverse poetic faults; he is obscure, dry, affected and tedious. But worst of all is the impossible subject matter, which really interests the poet himself as little as it does the reader. Nicander possessed even less of a scientific control of his subject than did Aratus of his; his wisdom is borrowed from a good work on poisons by a certain Apollodorus. That it should at all occur to a poet to bestow

poetic treatment on a scientific subject so remote and so essentially unpoetic is explicable only by the fact that he wrote in a period when didactic poetry as such was held in great respect, that is to say, after the decisive success of Aratus. This consideration should be given weight in fixing the date of Nicander, which has been much disputed and has not even been cleared up by the discovery of new inscriptions at Delphi; certainly one or more generations separate him from Aratus, and his date must not be put back too far. That he has survived to posterity and has come down to us with learned scholia is due in great part to one of his most objectionable faults, namely, the excessive mannerism of his archaizing, an inherited sin, since Antimachus' time, of the poetic school of Colophon; this archaism aroused the deep interest of the grammarians. The enormous superiority of the Roman poetry of the Augustan age over the later Hellenistic productions appears most graphically upon a comparison of Nicander's desiccated and dusty didactics with Vergil's perennially fresh *Georgics*. And yet the Roman poet used as a source a lost work of this same Nicander on husbandry.

3. DRAMA

It was surely no accident that enduring success was denied to Alexandrian poets in the field of dramatic poetry. Of all branches of poetry no other was so expressly Attic as was

the drama; its latest branch, New Comedy, was still in full bloom during the period of the first Ptolemies. Ptolemy I had attempted to transplant this living contemporary poetry to the banks of the Nile by summoning thither its greatest master, Menander. But the attempt failed, and the creative power of the Alexandrians was not sufficiently vigorous to set new and characteristic productions of its own beside the Attic comedy. To be sure, they cherished an ambition to supplant the Athenians in this *genre,* but the rapid disappearance of all Alexandrian dramas proves clearly enough that their efforts were in vain.

Fragments that have been recovered are for the most part from comedy. A series of papyri dating from early Ptolemaic times has restored to us several hundred verses of nameless comedies; isolated references in them to Egyptian conditions and Egyptian officials show that they originated in Egypt. But this local color is applied in a very thin coat. In all other respects the plays are thoroughly Attic in language and in motifs but less excellent than their Menandrian prototypes. This is true also of the Sicyonian or Corinthian Machon, the only comic poet who is repeatedly mentioned in literature as having produced his plays not in Athens but in Alexandria. High expectations are, indeed, aroused by the fine, somewhat artificial epigram which the poet Dioscorides composed for his tomb:

> Light Earth! with living ivy which loves strife,
> O'er Machon's tomb, the comic bard, be rife.

He was no thieving drone; in him thou hast
Cover'd a relic, worthy of Art past,
City of Cecrops! bitter thyme has e'en,
By Nile, amongst the Muses sometimes been.
— R. G. MacGregor

From these verses we are to assume that Machon transplanted to the Nile the bitter Attic thyme, that is to say, the mordant art of the Old Attic Comedy. But of this the two fragments which we possess give no indication whatever. In the one, an Athenian praises the delights of a certain Macedonian dish often mentioned in New Comedy; in the other, a gourmand develops the basic principles of his gastronomic art. Both fall quite within the sphere of New Comedy, and even the titles of both, *Ignorance* and *The Letter*, recur in the later Attic comedians. Also attributed to Machon is a collection of anecdotes called *Chriae*, of which we possess several hundred verses. They are written in the trimeters of comedy and include a great number of witty and for the most part very obscene stories of Attic gluttons, parasites, artists and, above all, hetaerae. Almost all these characters belong to the last third of the fourth century. Therefore one can hardly doubt that it was the society of the New and not the Old Comedy in which Machon felt at home — an atmosphere redolent of musk rather than of thyme.

In tragedy Alexandria boasted the possession of a *Pleiad* in the early Ptolemaic period, but the brilliance of these

seven stars waned so rapidly that only the early anthologies have preserved several fragments of them. These writers differ from the Attic tragedians in the stricter construction of the trimeter; in content they offer nothing worthy of note. It was the memory of this Alexandrian *Pleiad* that caused the French poets of the sixteenth century who grouped themselves about Ronsard likewise to be designated as the *Pleiad;* obviously the French *Pleiad* was more significant than was the Alexandrian in the literary history of its own people.

Of at least one of these soon forgotten pieces, the *Cassandreis* of Lycophron, we would gladly know more, for the play offered dramatic treatment of historical material of the recent past. The tragedies *Themistocles* and *The Pheraeans* of Moschion [67] also contained historical material; an effort was apparently made to revert to the oldest period of tragedy, Phrynichus' *Sack of Miletus* and Aeschylus' *Persae.* But the naturalization of historical tragedy prospered as little in the hands of these latter-day poets as it had in the hands of the oldest masters. It is not with them that modern historical tragedy has its affinities, nor with the extant *Persae* of Aeschylus, but rather with the Roman tragedy *Octavia,* falsely attributed to Seneca, which treats of the fall of Nero's unhappy wife.

[67] That Moschion, of whom about seventy verses are extant, belongs to this period I assume from his versification; he is not included in the *Pleiad.*

More intelligible to us are the attempts of the tragedians of the *Pleiad* to resuscitate the almost defunct satyr play, once the necessary conclusion to every tragic trilogy. To attain this goal two quite diverse paths were followed. The poet Sositheus, in his *Daphnis* or *Lityerses,* harked back to a favorite motif of the old satyr play, the conquest of a rude barbarian at the hands of a Greek hero. Here the Phrygian king Lityerses figures; he forces strangers to contest with him in harvesting a field of grain, and decapitates the vanquished, until Heracles appears on the scene and metes out a similar fate to the barbarian. Into this simple story the Alexandrian poet wove the strains of the bucolic poetry, which was then in the ascendant. He has Lityerses, after whom a harvest folk-song was called, be surpassed by the shepherd Daphnis in a singing match. On the other hand, he works in the love-motif which New Comedy had made popular; Daphnis wins a beloved maiden, Thalia, who had come into servitude to the brute.

Lycophron of Chalcis seeks to modernize the satyr play in quite a different manner. Already at the court of Alexander the Great at Babylon there had been presented a satyr play, called by the unexplained name *Agen,* in which contemporary persons and events were treated in comic fashion. So now Lycophron writes a satyr play, entitled *Menedemus,* after his teacher, the philosopher Menedemus of Eretria, in which he employs harmless mockery to portray the frugal banquets of philosophers. This seems much more reminis-

cent of Old Comedy than of the old satyr play. Unfortunately we know but little of the Alexandrian satyr play. But so much seems clear: whether blended with the personal satire of the Old Comedy or with the love intrigues of the New Comedy, the satyr play could not be awakened to renewed life. It remained among the experiments having only a certain literary interest, comparable, perhaps, to the parabasis comedies of Platen.

From this same Lycophron we possess a great work, the most extensive poetic production, except Apollonius' epic of the Argonauts, which has been preserved from the Alexandrian period, namely, the *Alexandra*. Although this work is to the modern taste perhaps the least palatable fruit of Greek poetry, it must nevertheless be treated in some detail, for in spite of all its peculiarities it undeniably possesses a style, though to be sure, judged by our own standards, a style insufferably affected. The *Alexandra* has brought philologians, both ancient and modern, to the point of despair, and to this day practically every question in regard to the poem is still under dispute — classification, purpose, composer, date, and the explanation of innumerable details. This is not the place, naturally, to explain my position in regard to the contested problems; I wish only to give the modern reader some notion of this curious poem. A faithful translation into a modern language is rendered impossible by the style. The portions cited from the English of Lord Royston are a paraphrase rather than a translation.

I fear they will seem obscure enough to the reader, although many of the riddles in the Greek are already partially or entirely removed. The whole poem, consisting of 1,474 trimeters, is a single long speech, the report of the predictions of the prophetess Cassandra, here called Alexandra, who is imprisoned in a tower; the report is given by her warder to her father Priam on the day of the departure of Paris for the rape of Helen. I give herewith the introductory words of the messenger, which are almost as obscure as are the prophecies that follow:

Mark then my words, for I will speak, O King,
Though long the task, and tedious be the toil;
For not with sweet and soothing blandishment
Flowed from the Maiden's lips the gentle stream
Of oracles benign, but sounds of woe
Burst dreadful, as she chewed the laurel leaf,
And ever and anon, like the black Sphinx,
Poured the full tide of enigmatic song.
All shalt thou hear, which Memory can retain,
And through th' obscure of prophecies explore
Thine uncouth way; for now the barriers yield,
And o'er th' enchanted ground mine eager soul
Starts like a steed, and wings her rapid flight.
The Morn had left thy brother's bed, the couch
Of aged Tithon, near to Cerne's isle,
And o'er the misty mountain-tops had flown
Jocund, upborne on Pegasëan wing;
The busy crew their moorings had unloosed,
And heaved their heavy anchors from the sand:

And now th' Idëan Daughters of the grove
Spread their white wings athwart the Hellespont,
Walking with insect feet upon the waves
Beyond Calydna's isle; their swelling sails,
White as the plumage of the crane, were filled
With breezes issuing from the stormy North:
When, phrenzied as a moon-struck Bacchanal,
CASSANDRA wandered upon Ate's hills,
Hills crowned with thousand herds, and poured aloud
Presaging sounds, and prophecies of woe.

— Lord Royston

Even readers who are familiar with Greek geography and mythology will hardly recognize in these verses such geographic names as Phegion,[68] Cerne, Calydnae; similarly unfamiliar will be the version of the saga that after the death of Bellerophon Eos obtained his winged steed, Pegasus, as a saddle horse. Further, that Tithonus, the beloved of Eos, for whom the latter had obtained the boon of immortality from Zeus, though she forgot to ask also for him the gift of eternal youth, was a half-brother of Priam is a fact which cannot be familiar to many. Yet this introduction is on the whole clear and intelligible compared to the 1,430 verses of the prophetess, which the warder, endowed with

[68] Since the name Phegion is not used in the translation quoted above, we subjoin a prose translation by A. W. Mair, which we reprint from The Loeb Classical Library, by permission: "Dawn was just soaring over the steep crag of Phegion on swift wings of Pegasus, leaving in his bed by Cerne Tithonus, brother of thine by another mother, and the sailors loosed in calm weather the cables from the grooved rock and cut the landward ropes."

enviable memory, now delivers without pause or respite, only to close his report with a short epilogue of fourteen verses.

The misfortunes that are to befall Troy and the entire world as a result of Paris' ravaging expedition constitute the principal theme of Alexandra's prediction, expanded to so unmanageable a length. After touching briefly on the earlier misfortunes that had befallen her city, she follows step by step the wicked bridal voyage of her brother, the preparations of the Greeks, the sacrifice of Iphigenia at Aulis, and the landing of the Greek host on the Trojan coast. That Lycophron is able to produce intelligible and impressive pictures of individual occurrences may be proven by the verses which describe what follows the landing of the Greeks:

> Now Mars showers down a fiery sleet, and winds
> His trumpet-shell, distilling blood, and now,
> Knit with the Furies and the Fates in dance,
> Leads on the dreadful revelry; the fields
> With iron harvests of embattled spears
> Gleam; from the towers I hear a voice of woe
> Rise to the stedfast Empyréan; crowds
> Of zoneless matrons rend their flowing robes,
> And sobs and shrieks cry loud unto the night
> One woe is past! — Another woe succeeds!
>
> — Lord Royston

There follow the death of Hector and the fate of other offspring of Priam, such as Troilus and Polyxena, the mur-

der of Priam at the altar of Zeus, the stoning of Alexandra's mother, Hecuba, and Alexandra's own violation at the hands of the Locrian Ajax before the image of Athena. Herewith the first section, on the fall of Troy, comes to an end. But Ajax' sacrilege in the presence of Athena has alienated the hearts of the gods from the conquerors:

> . . . then Greece
> For this one crime, aye for this one, shall weep
> Myriads of sons; no funeral urn, but rocks
> Shall hearse their bones; no friends upon their dust
> Shall pour the dark libations of the dead;
> A name, a breath, an empty sound remains,
> A fruitless marble warm with bitter tears
> Of sires, and orphan babes, and widowed wives!
>
> — Lord Royston

The blasphemous Ajax suffers shipwreck and is drowned with many comrades at the Gyraean promontory. Of the other victorious heroes many do not reach home, but after long wandering find rest at last in foreign lands. The voyages of certain of the heroes in the distant West — for example, those of Diomedes and Odysseus — are described in great detail, for the historical work of the Sicilian Timaeus, which had lately appeared, afforded our poet a great abundance of recondite sagas, from Magna Graecia, of wanderings and new settlements. Even the victors who succeed in reaching home suffer various calamities on their arrival. So Agamemnon is laid low in the bath by the ax of Cly-

taemnestra, and with him Cassandra herself is slain by the jealous queen. Some slight comfort is afforded the royal house of Troy by these punishments visited by the gods upon its conquerors; a greater comfort perhaps is derived from the expiation which is rendered fallen Ilion and its royal house. To atone for the violation of Cassandra, the Locrians must supply temple servants to the Ilian Athena from their noblest houses for a thousand years; after their arrival at Troy the maidens chosen for this service are threatened with death by the irate Trojans unless they succeed in reaching the temple of the goddess. Hecuba is taken into the train of Hecate, the goddess of night. Hector's body will be removed to Thebes, where it will be accorded heroic honors. But the greatest comfort that the prophetess grants Troy is the founding of Rome by scions of its royal house:

"Visions of glory, crowd not on my soul;"
Immortal sons of an immortal sire,
Bound on your brows (so valour should be crowned)
The laurelled meed of conquest shall entwine;
O'er earth and seas extends your dread domain,
Powerful of realms; o'er empires and o'er waves
In solemn majesty your sceptred hand
Rules far and wide, and shakes the conquering spear.
Nor yet, my country, no, nor yet thy fame
Shall fade in darkness; such a martial pair,[69]

[69] Here the original has an untranslatable play on words. *Rome*, which signifies "strength" in Greek, forms an allusion to the city of Rome which becomes clear from the references to Aeneas which follow.

Twin Lions, shall my Kinsman leave, who springs
From Chœras and the Castnian Queen, well skilled
To pour the honied words, or guide the war.
— Lord Royston

The lion pair are Romulus and Remus; their father is Aeneas. Aeneas' voyage to Latium by way of Macedonia and Etruria is described in detail; there he founds the thirty cities of the Latin federation.

One would think that Cassandra-Alexandra's prophetic material was by this time exhausted: not at all. She merely proceeds in a new direction, following closely a hint in Herodotus. In the introduction to his history, Herodotus had explained that the hereditary hatred between Asia and Europe was caused by the women of each continent having been ravished by the other in the mythical period, and in particular by the Trojan War, which was the outcome of the abduction of Helen. This notion is taken up by Lycophron. His Cassandra next speaks of events of the past, the abduction of Io, Europa, Medea; she describes the descent of the Amazons on Attica as a punitive expedition for the rape of Antiope by Theseus and Heracles. Then she proceeds to the future conflicts between the nations of the two continents. Further acts in this drama of world history are the immigration of Lydian Tyrrhenians to Etruria, the settlement of Ionians and Dorians on the west coast of Asia Minor, an unhistorical expedition of the Phrygians into the Thracian and Macedonian country (in reality the Phrygians

emigrated from Europe to Asia), and above all the great expedition of Xerxes; the finale is Alexander's conquest of Asia. It is he that reconciles the two continents, since he can trace his descent on his mother's side both to Achilles and to Priam. This reference to Alexander is to be deduced from the following obscure verses; the identification is difficult but certain. They follow the much more definite description of Xerxes' expedition:

> Then woes, and wars, and wasting tides of blood,
> Shall sweep conflicting armies from the world;
> For some in plains shall bow their heads to death,
> And some on ridges of the mountain rock,
> And some on seas shall sink beneath the wave,
> All murdered: nor till then shall grisly War
> Sheath his fell sword, and break his iron car,
> Till sprung from Dardan seed from Æacus,
> Thesprotian, Chaladræan, forth shall rush
> The Lion form, and ranging for revenge
> Spring from his lair, and lap his kindred blood:
> Round him in fawning blandishment shall cower
> And cringe, and crook the hinges of their knees,
> The chiefs of ancient Argolis, and yield
> Sceptres, and realms, and diadems, and thrones.
>
> — Lord Royston

The comprehension of these verses is rendered especially difficult by the fact that the Argive chieftains mentioned are not Greeks but the kings of Persia: according to a genealogy as old as Herodotus, these traced their descent from

the Argive Perseus. The red lion, who is descended from Aeacus and Dardanus, Thesprotian (Molossian) on the side of his mother (Olympias) and Chalastraean (Macedonian) on the side of his father, is recognizable as Alexander. That he should at the time be termed the Wolf of Galadra (Macedonia) is hardly possible; we shall therefore have to understand the Wolf of Galadra [70] as a designation for the entire body of Macedonians, army and folk.

Much more obscure and still unexplained in spite of all efforts are the verses which follow immediately, with which Cassandra closes the long chain of her prophecies:

> But when athwart the empty-vaulted heaven
> Six times of years have rolled, War shall repose
> His lance, obedient to my Kinsman's voice;
> Who rich in spoils of monarchs shall return
> With friendly looks, and carollings of love,
> While Peace sits brooding upon seas and land.
>
> — Lord Royston

[70] Since the expression "Wolf of Galadra" is not used in the translation quoted above, we subjoin a prose translation by A. W. Mair, which we reprint from The Loeb Classical Library, by permission:

"And many contests and slaughters in between shall solve the struggles of men, contending for dread empire, now on land, now on the plough-turned backs of earth, until a tawny lion — sprung from Aeacus and from Dardanus, Thesprotian at once and Chalastraean — shall lull to rest the grievous tumult, and, overturning on its face all the house of his kindred, shall compel the chiefs of the Argives to cower and fawn upon the wolf-leader of Galadra, and to hand over the sceptre of the ancient monarchy."

Without doubt battles and negotiations are referred to here which some relative of the prophetess, therefore a Roman or an Asiatic, was to conduct with Macedonia six generations after Alexander.

Let us abandon, however, this puzzle and consider the content of the prophecy as a whole. The systematic composition of the huge material appears much clearer in my statement of the contents than it does in the poem itself; episodes of the most disparate character are inserted continually, and these often threaten to sever the unifying thread which runs through the work. Undeniably it is a conception of baroque magnitude to include in this one speech of the frenzied prophetess the entire store of mythical and historical traditions from the earliest times down to contemporary times, and group them all with reference to a few outstanding points of view.

But of the peculiar difficulty of the poem neither the summary nor the passages submitted in translation give even an approximate idea. Every story separately, even every verse, has its own enigmas; such was the poet's avowed intention. Even the language is obscure and varicolored to an unexampled degree. The rarest and most unintelligible expressions are drawn with amazing erudition from all branches of poetry — epic, lyric, tragic and even comic. Of the words employed about half are unusual; more than a tenth we find only in Lycophron's writings. Even ancient readers, with the exception of a few learned grammarians,

required a commentary to understand his language. Quite as unusual and remote are the versions of the sagas offered. Many of them are supported by the learned ancient commentaries from unread ancient authors; without these commentaries we should be helpless. We may assume that Lycophron made no innovations of any consequence in the sagas, but had some obscure authority or other for every unfamiliar turn he gives.

Comprehension is further rendered difficult by the fact that persons are practically never called by their own names. The names of Priam, Hecuba, Hector, Paris, Aeneas, Odysseus, Diomedes, Menelaus, do not occur in the entire poem, although these heroes are constantly being mentioned; similarly neither Xerxes nor Alexander the Great is mentioned by name. Individual personages are indicated by periphrases and particularly by animals, such as lion, wolf, dragon, ox, eagle, dove. The gods also, practically without exception, are designated only by unusual cult titles. So, for example, the name Athena does not occur, although the goddess appears under twenty-seven different designations. When a familiar name does occur, almost always another person is intended than the one usually associated with it. So, for example, Priam falls at the altar of Agamemnon; Agamemnon here is not the Greek commander but an appellation of Zeus, who was so called in Sparta. Another trap is set for the reader in the only passage where the name Heracles occurs. Everyone would naturally assume

that the famous hero is intended; the verses, however, refer to the murder by Polyperchon, in the year 309, of a historical Heracles, reported to be an illegitimate son of Alexander the Great. This event, of no significance in itself, is included only in order to lead the reader astray by the use of the name. That a poet not without gifts should muster the entire store of his extraordinary erudition in order to compose, with accurate versification, in language that is baroque yet often impressive, a poem the length of an Attic tragedy, which, in its final form should impress the reader only as being one great riddle, would tend to indicate insanity on the part of the poet. Only in an age of overrefined intellectual culture, which would value a riddle for its own sake because it promoted keen thinking, could so monstrous a poem come into being and hope for approbation, at least in the exclusive circle of literary epicures. The poem did in fact receive this approbation, as is evidenced by the extensive use made of it by Euphorion, and above all by the fact of its survival.

Obscure as all else pertaining to the *Alexandra* is the poetic classification for it which its author had in mind. That a poem which consists of a single endlessly long report, without dialogue and without any trace of action, may not be classified as tragedy is self-evident. It has become the practice of late to call the work an *iambus*, but this profits us little, for *iambi* of such extent, such design, and such content are as unheard-of as is such a tragedy. There are indeed

many elements in the poem characteristic of tragedy. One is the figure of the unhappy Trojan prophetess who foresees her own and others' sorrow without being able to forestall it; Aeschylus had portrayed her with entrancing power in his *Agamemnon*. Another is the form of a message which a watchman of humble station delivers to an heroic king. A third is the tone of the language, to which Aeschylus in particular has contributed, though many other elements, too, help to enrich it. Another element is the structure of the trimeter, which, while it differs from the Attic usage, is quite in agreement with the remains of Alexandrian tragedy. We may therefore say that tragedy was Lycophron's starting point. His baroque poem is based on the motifs and the artistic media afforded by tragedy. Yet Lycophron has so handled these motifs and these media that his poem may not be pigeonholed in any recognized branch of poetry; in the literature of the world it stands alone, for which we may thank Heaven!

A word remains to be said on the hotly contested question of the date of the *Alexandra*. If, as I have intimated in my discussion of its tradition, it is a work of the tragic poet Lycophron of Chalcis, it must have been composed in the first third of the third century B.C. Since the Ptolemies are not taken into consideration by it at all and Egypt only slightly, it must have been completed before Lycophron's call to Alexandria, that is, before 274. Referred to this period, the verses cited above on Rome's might by land and

sea are very arresting; an ancient grammarian remarks in reference to these verses that the poem must have been written by another Lycophron, not by the tragic poet who lived under Ptolemy Philadelphus. In modern times this idea was taken up by the great historian Niebuhr; it still has many followers. The closing verses of the prophecy (see p. 270) were taken as additional proof: the six generations were so calculated, by the use of some violence,[71] that the date resulting was that of the first great conflict of Rome with Macedonia, the defeat of King Philip V by Titus Flamininus at Cynoscephalae in 197 B.C. But this very tempting solution is destroyed by the fact that the most famous Alexandrian philologian, Aristophanes of Byzantium, mentions the *Alexandra* as the work of Lycophron of Chalcis at the beginning of the second century B.C. A solution has been sought by suspecting the verses referring to Rome and the closing verses of the prophecy to be later interpolations in the completed work of Lycophron. But who would be interested in smuggling such insertions into this inaccessible riddle-poem eighty years after its composition? And who could so cleverly imitate its unique style that not even the keenest philological eye can detect the slightest variation?

We can only believe, therefore, that Lycophron possessed discernment unusually keen for his period in that he fore-

[71] If generations are reckoned at thirty years, which is the usual practice, "Six generations after Alexander" would give a period subsequent to 150 B.C.

saw the great future of the Roman people, which had just then turned the eyes of the Greek world upon itself by its long and finally victorious war against Pyrrhus. Her claim to sea power Rome had hitherto justified through her coins, which had long borne a ship's prow as an emblem, rather than by actual prowess at sea. The closing verses, then, are truly a prophecy. The poet could safely predict events six generations after Alexander or four after his own time, without fear of being contradicted. Indeed it seems to me quite in keeping with the character of the entire poem for Lycophron to close his long series of enigmas with a final riddle which even the cleverest contemporary could not solve, but for which a distant future had or might have the answer.

4. THE MIME

We have seen in the case of the *Alexandra* of Lycophron how its willfully peculiar baroque style made difficult its inclusion in any of the ordinary classes of literature. The same difficulty confronts us in not a few of the Alexandrian poetic productions, and for this reason modern usage has instituted a capacious new pigeonhole in which many works are included that, though differing widely from one another, exhibit a certain basic kinship. This new genus is the mime. The name was first applied to the small realistic pictures of the life of the common people to which Sophron of Syracuse gave literary form in the fifth century. Unfor-

tunately, though no less a person than Plato valued these mimes highly, the extant remains are but scanty. Enough is preserved, however, to give a general notion of the form. A speaker appeared before the people and rendered short scenes of daily life in prose form and in the popular dialect. Sophron's mimes were later divided as " of men " and " of women "; fragments indicate that the world of women was well represented. We find such feminine titles as *The Needlewoman, The Sorceresses, The Mother-in-Law,* and such masculine titles as *The Peasant* and *The Tunny-Fisher.* The essential feature is the close fidelity to actual life in the language employed and in the manners portrayed, and, further, in the improvisation, real or apparent, the disregard of established artistic principles of structure. Keen observation and caricature of folk life as well as capacity for improvisation seem to be specifically southern Italian and Sicilian qualities. An unbroken thread connects the mimes of Sophron with ever recurring folk-pranks, and with those of Lower Italy in particular; related to them are the German Hanswurst and Kasperle.[72] In a wider sense the Greeks designated as mimes all manner of entertainers, whether they exhibited their skill at the banquet or in the market place; the term in its inclusive sense embraced singers, dancers, jugglers, conjurers, pantomimes — the various classes of performers,

[72] These relations have been clarified in particular by Hermann Reich in his significant but unfinished work, *Der Mimus* (Vol. I, Berlin, 1903). Unfortunately Reich is carried away by his theories and his work suffers from lack of the critical faculty.

in short, that are to be seen today in our variety theaters and circuses. And just as we have developed various designations for the various aspects of the art of amusing, such as the ballad singer, the *diseuse*, the lightning-change artist, the imitator of animal calls, so we find a number of designations for the various classes of mimic artists that flourished in Hellenistic times, according as the artist specialized in recitation, in song or in prose, parody of tragedy or representation of folk types, the dance or athletic feats. Later, from about the time of Caesar, the mime conquered even the theaters in Rome, as it had those of Greece, and gradually swallowed up, as it were, all other dramatic forms. In mime there were gathered together the motifs of tragedy and comedy, heroic sagas and realistic character types, the fairy realm and daily existence, gorgeous settings and primitive simplicity, scenes of realistic horror and acrobatic feats, song and dance, verse and prose; all were combined and made into a great brew, to which coarse obscenity and vulgar wit added the spice necessary for the palate of the crowd. In its use of all means imaginable and in its crowding together of the most contradictory elements the great mime of the imperial period is highly suggestive of the modern film dramas; like them it seriously endangered soberer art. For centuries the mime controlled the theater both in the East and in the West. Christian authors waged a continual war against it, though long in vain; when we moderns refer to actors as mimes, usually with an

uncomplimentary connotation, it is a consequence of the mimic dramas of the Empire. In my opinion, in the Alexandrian period this pretentious greater mime did not yet exist.[73] The leap from the cabaret to the stage had not yet been achieved. Nevertheless, the colorful crowd of small mimic productions enjoyed a large place in the interest of the Hellenistic public.

In general the mime in all its many varieties is outside the pale of literature. It serves the need for daily amusement and has no thought of permanence. And yet at times it does penetrate into the sphere of literature, as when a gifted personality, such as Sophron, by his unpretentious productions wins the enduring esteem of lofty spirits, or when sensitive poets evaluate properly its strongly pulsating life and consciously use it to introduce fresh blood into the higher art.

Various Hellenistic poets did so use it, especially Theocritus, and it was just by his use of it that he was able to influence world literature so strongly. By such transplantation into artistic poetry the mime soon forfeited the best part of its native vigor and realism. An analogy may be offered from the grape vine. If Burgundian grapes are planted in Asia Minor, the wine pressed during the first years tastes quite like Burgundian, as I have found by personal experience. But after a decade this flavor disappears and the later harvests are hardly to be differen-

[73] Reich, in the work cited, in note 72, is of a different opinion.

tiated from the *vin ordinaire* of Anatolia. So in the poetry of Theocritus one may still detect the tart freshness of the uncultivated mime: it is quite lost in his successors.

Theocritus is one of the freshest and most charming of Alexandrian poets, not a creator on a grand scale, but an innovator. Of his life we know only little that is certain. This is to be especially deplored in his case, for poetry and life stood in closer interrelationship with him than with most of his contemporaries. He was a native Sicilian and a citizen of Syracuse, but his childhood must have been spent in the country rather than in the metropolis. The date of his birth is not established; it is probably toward the end of the fourth century. An early connection with the Greek East is probable, but the *Charites* (*The Graces*),[74] his earliest datable poem, which may be referred to the year 275, shows us the poet in his homeland trying to win the patronage of Hiero, the principal personage of Syracuse, not yet king but generalissimo of all the Sicilian cities. Theocritus' economic situation at the time was obviously needy; he was as much in need of a royal patron as was Callimachus at the time of the *Hymn to Zeus* (see p. 106). I cite the charming verses in which he describes the precarious state of his *Charites*, i.e., his poems, and the niggardliness of the wealthy:

[74] In the dating of this poem, as well as in many other disputed questions, I agree with Ulrich v. Wilamowitz.

Ah, but of those that now dwell under the glimmer of morning
Who that will ope his door and joyfully offer my Poems
Home in his house, nor send them away from the gate unguerdoned?
Wroth to me then they return, feet bare, and sorely revile me,
Saying a profitless road they went; and again they will seat them
Down in the coffer'd void, with their heads on their shivering knees bowed,
Fearfully waiting there where aye their accustomed abode is,
Each time they from a quest found vain come back disappointed.
Who will to-day be a friend to the singer that hymns his praises?
I know not; for men no longer desire as aforetime
Glory for noble deeds; but Money is monarch and master.
Each man keepeth his hand on the purse in his robe's bosom, seeking
Chances of silver and gold, and would offer to none as a guerdon
Even a scraping of rust, but would utter his ready rejoinders: —
'Closer is knee than shin!' 'Self first!' 'Heaven cares for the poets.'
'Homer's enough for us all, and who would hearken another?'
'Best of the bards is he that wants no part of my substance.'

— J. H. HALLARD [75]

[75] From *The Idylls of Theocritus, with the Fragments, Bion and Moschus*, by J. H. Hallard. Reprinted by permission of Messrs. George Routledge and Sons, Ltd.

The author proceeds to explain that only the poet's song assures immortality. No one would ever have heard of the noble Thessalian houses of the Aleuadae and the Scopadae had not Simonides celebrated their athletic victories in song. Even the warriors at Troy had been forgotten but for Homer's poems. Therefore let the mighty of the earth give support to the poets of the present. Quite frankly he offers himself to the new Achilles, Hiero, as a herald of his future deeds.

Apparently on this occasion Theocritus' *Charites* again had to make their grumbling way home barefoot, for two years later we meet the poet in Alexandria. The panegyric of Ptolemy Philadelphus is a companion piece to the *Charites* which had been destined for Hiero. Here, after fitting celebration of the king's parents, his power and his wealth, the poet says:

Neither useless lieth his gold in his palace, for aye increasing
Like the hoards that with toil manifold ants pile unresting, unceasing;
But a goodly portion the splendour-gleaming temples receive;
For the first fruits aye doth he render, and gifts beside doth he give.
Full many a gift oversea unto mighty kings he sends,
And to cities his bounty is free, and lavish to loyal friends.
Never cometh a bard to the singing-contests in Bacchus' praise

Who hath skill in the song clear-ringing a voice inspired to raise,
But a guerdon worthy his lay he wins of our lord the King,
And the priests of the Muses aye King Ptolemy's praises sing
For his bountihead. What crown of beauty is more of worth
For the wealthy, than high renown among all the sons of earth?
This only to Atreus' son remaineth; but all that prey,
All treasures of Priam, won from his halls in the triumphing day,
To the bourne whence returning is none they have fleeted in darkness away.

— A. S. Way [76]

These lines could be spoken only by one who has himself experienced the generosity of the prince. The closing lines on the fame of the sons of Atreus designedly recall the theme of the *Charites*, that the heroic deeds of the past have attained immortality only through the poet's song. Theocritus, then, found a friendly reception at the court of the Ptolemies; his art too was greatly influenced by the Alexandrian poets, and in particular by their chief, Callimachus. We have already seen that in the controversy regarding the possibility of composing a great contemporary epic Theocritus shared the view of Callimachus (see p. 152) and that he criticized the first two books of Apollonius' epic of the

[76] From *Theocritus, Bion and Moschus*, by A. S. Way. Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company.

Argonauts (see p. 193). His versification in the epyllion is entirely in the manner of Callimachus.

But he remained settled in Alexandria probably for no long time; we hear of no connection with the Museum and the learned work of the library. On the other hand, it is certain that he resided for a considerable period on the island Cos; this island is the background of his most beautiful poem, *The Harvest-Home*. He visited Miletus also, for he had a good friend there, the physician Nicias, whose young wife he presented with a distaff accompanied by a charming poem as a gift in repayment of hospitality. We do not know the chronological relationship of his residence in Cos to that in Alexandria, nor do we know how far he traveled about the East, beyond his visit to Miletus. The length of his life is also unknown: there is no indication that he lived beyond the middle of the century.

In form and in content Theocritus is a very versatile poet. He resuscitated the long mute Aeolic dialect and the measures of the Lesbians in *The Distaff* and in two pretty songs about boy favorites. In highly varied meters he composed delicate epigrams for statues of poets, portraits, votive offerings, and tombstones. In the epic dialect he composed epyllia, poems of homage, and hymns. He imitated an old epithalamium, using Doric dialect and epic verse. But Theocritus' fame does not rest on these works; [77] one hardly even thinks of them at the mention of his name. Posterity

[77] Citations from his epyllia are given on pp. 157-163, above.

has known Theocritus as the creator of the bucolic idyll. The term " idyll " has undergone a great change in meaning in modern times. In the Greek it signifies simply a small individual poem, nothing being implied as to the atmosphere or content. In connection with the words " idyll " and " idyllic " we have learned to think of gentle and calm existence colored by delicate sentiment. This conception is associated with Theocritus, it is true, but the idyll has received its particular coloring from the long series of Theocritus' imitators, who wrote in the most diverse ages among the most varied peoples, rather than from the Greek poet's own compositions.

Such of his poems as are specifically denominated idylls by modern scholars — by the ancients all his poems are so termed — might better be classified as rural and urban mimes.

Following in the path of his fellow countryman Sophron, Theocritus at first represented in poetic form realistic scenes from shepherd and town life. In a mild form of the Doric dialect and a peculiar variation of the epic meter he introduces us, in his rural mimes, to the cowherds and goatherds of his western Greek home. He lets these rustics chat and quarrel, vie with one another in song, relate old folk tales, and strive for the favor of their fair ones. How much old folk poetry is to be found, especially in the singing contests, it is difficult to say; the proportion of such poetry is, however, often exaggerated.

The herdsmen of Theocritus are not in the least drawing-room peasants. They have nothing at all in common with the dainty shepherds of the rococo period. They are lusty rustics, and their demeanor is often quite coarse. But it was just this nature unadorned that pleased the overrefined cosmopolites of the capital on the Nile and which may still be found pleasing today. Vergil's shepherds are already much tamer and paler. The number of exclusively rural mimes is not large. I cite as example the fourth poem, *The Two Herdsmen,* which is one of the most unpretentious of his works. The content of the poem is as simple as possible. An oxherd, Aegon, from the neighborhood of Croton in southern Italy, has been persuaded by the celebrated athlete Milon to try his fortune at the Olympic games. He has entrusted his herd to a comrade, Corydon, who now meets another herdsman, Battus. Battus speaks mockingly of Aegon's ambition and the sad state of the cows who miss their master; Corydon protests his care for the herd entrusted to him. An athletic feat by Aegon is related; then comes a sentimental plaint of Battus for the death of his beloved Amaryllis; the plaint is suddenly interrupted by insubordinate behavior on the part of the grazing kine. Battus treads on a thorn, which hurts his foot; the thorn is drawn out by Corydon. There follows some coarse gossip on the amorousness of Corydon's master, and the dialogue breaks off.

BATTUS

Tell, Corydon, whose may they be, these kine? Is Philondas their lord?

CORYDON

Nay, Aegon: he gave them to me, in the meadow to feed them and ward.

BATTUS

And at even thou still goest halves in the milk of them all, I ween.

CORYDON

Nay, his old sire putteth the calves to the dams — O, his eyes are keen!

BATTUS

But the master — where doth he flee us? Whither from sight hath he sped?

CORYDON

Hast heard not? — away to Alphoeus [78] our champion hath Milo led.

BATTUS

Him? — when did the eyes of him light on the oil of the wrestlers' play?

CORYDON

Against Herakles' self could his might be matched in contest — they say.

BATTUS

Ay, so did my mother declare that Pollux by me was outdone!

CORYDON

So is it: a spade doth he bear, and a score of his sheep: he is gone.

BATTUS

This Milo will lesson, I trow, the wolves ere long to rage!

[78] The river that runs through the district of Olympia.

CORYDON

For their lord do the heifers low, and pine at their pasturage.

BATTUS

Hapless are these, I vow, such a pitiful master is theirs!

CORYDON

Hapless indeed: yea, now not one for the pasture cares.

BATTUS

See there: to a frame all bone doth the hide of yon heifer cling!
Doth she feed upon dewdrops alone, like the grigs through the grass that spring?

CORYDON

Nay, nay; but whiles do I lead her where Aesarus' waters flow,
And armfuls of grass of the mead, soft fodder, before her I throw;
And whiles in the shade of Latymnius' glade doth she skip to and fro.

BATTUS

And yon red bull, how thin! — may such an one fall one day
Unto Lamprias' sons to win, when sacrifice-dues they pay
Unto Hera: for still devisers of ill in their hearts be they.

CORYDON

And yet to the river-mead is he driven, where Physcus doth flow,
And anon to Neaethus, to feed where all things beautiful grow;

And to odorous beeswort I lead him, where endive and goat-wort blow.

BATTUS

Alack! thy kine will go down unto Hades, 'tis all too plain,
Poor Aegon, since thou for renown of triumph accursèd art fain!
And the pipe that of old thou didst fashion doth mould befleck and stain.

CORYDON

That pipe? — by the Nymphs, not so! He gave me the dainty thing
When to Pisa [79] he passed; and, I trow, I too can skill to sing:
I can chant the Glauce-lays, I can warble the Pyrrhus-ditty,
Crotona the fair can I praise, and Zacynthus the goodly city,
And Lacinium dayspring-bright, where our boxer of matchless might,
This Aegon, devoured with ease broad barley-cakes threescore.
There too by the hoofs did he seize that bull, and downward bore
From the mountain, his small keepsake for his Amaryllis: the throng
Of her handmaids screamed; but he brake into laughter loud and long.

BATTUS

Alas, Amaryllis the fair! — thou art dead, but I cannot forget thee,
Lost love, mine heart's one star! Not dearer my she-goats are!

[79] A village in the vicinity of the Olympian sanctuary the name of which is occasionally used as an epithet for the sanctuary.

Woe's me for my doom of despair, for the cruel fate that met thee!

CORYDON

Take heart, friend Battus: thy night may end in a fairer day:
The living may yet hope on: hopeless the dead are alone.
Sometimes doth the heaven wax bright, it raineth not alway.

BATTUS

I endure — ah, pelt from the brow yon calves! — at the olive-sprays there
The rogues are nibbling now!

CORYDON

Shoo, Silver-coat, out! — you dare! —
Flame-coat, will you not heed? — shoo! hence to the slope of the hill!
A bad end will I deal you! — indeed, by the Forest-king, but I will,
If you get not away hence! — quick! — why, back again is she stealing!
O for my hare-hunting stick! I would try if your hide hath feeling!

BATTUS

For heaven's sake, Corydon, see — 'neath mine ankle the spike of a thistle
This moment hath pierced! O me, how densely here do they bristle,
The arrow-head thorns! May a bad end come to thine heifer! The sting
As I gaped at her, pierced me. My lad, prithee say, dost thou see the thing?

CORYDON

Yes, yes: and my nails have laid hold now — behold the same!

BATTUS

How tiny a wound has it made! — yet how tall a man can it lame!

CORYDON

When next to the mountain you go, friend Battus, go not unshod,
For thorns and briers grow there; rough are the paths to be trod.

BATTUS

Doth our greybeard clip and kiss — good Corydon, prithee say —
That black-browed sweeting of his, who enthralled him once on a day?

CORYDON

Ay, now as ever. I came on them both beside the byre
But lately: still doth he flame with the heat of the olden fire.

BATTUS

Well done, Master Frisk! of thy blood art thou verily near of kin
To the Satyrs, or sons of the wood, Pan's children goatish of shin!

— A. S. WAY [80]

Here the dialogue is continued from beginning to end; the form is, so to speak, dramatic. This is not always the case,

[80] From *Theocritus, Bion and Moschus*, by A. S. Way. Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company.

for the poet may narrate in his own person. The sixth poem, *A Country Singing-Match*, begins as follows:

Damoetas and Daphnis the neat-herd, driving their flocks o'er the leas,
In one spot chanced to meet: russet-bearded was one of these,
Half-bearded the other; and they, in the noon of a summer day,
Where forth was a fountain springing, sat down and chanted the lay.
It was Daphnis began the singing, as the challenger doth alway.

— A. S. Way [81]

Then both sing of the love of the Cyclops Polyphemus for the beautiful nymph Galatea. Damoetas, in fact, sings the rôle of Polyphemus. Without the herdsmen having exchanged a word, the poet concludes:

So made Damoetas an end: then kissed he Daphnis his friend.
And he gave him a pipe, and the other to him gave a flute for guerdon:
So Daphnis piped, while his brother herdman fluted the burden;
And the calves were dancing anon o'er the soft grass unto the strain.
So neither the victory won, but unvanquished abode they twain.

— A. S. Way [81]

[81] From *Theocritus, Bion and Moschus*, by A. S. Way. Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company.

Conversely, an entire poem may be put into the mouth of a single shepherd, without any lines from the poet himself. This is the case in the third poem, *The Serenade*, which I should like to quote as being characteristic of Theocritus' art in various respects. First, I note its tendency toward strophic arrangement: after five introductory verses there follow immediately three short strophes of two verses each, after the fourth of which a single verse is inserted to mark a decided pause in the sense. Theocritus' poems were intended for recitation, as was all poetry after Homer which was written in the epic meter; but the division into short strophes stamps *The Serenade* more definitely as a song. Secondly, it is to be noted that the poet here transfers to his shepherds a type of song which actually originated in urban surroundings. The song that is sung by the lover who is shut out before the door of his or her unyielding beloved, the so-called *paraclausithyron*, is an old form of folk lyric. Traces of it are to be found in Alcaeus, Aristophanes uses it in a comedy, it is frequently found in various forms in the older Alexandrian epigrammatists, and it was taken over by Horace and the Roman elegiac poets.

Practically all the strains which Theocritus' shepherd employs to soften his Amaryllis recur in other poems of the same class; such are the lament over her cold-heartedness, the promise of gifts, the description of his own mental agony, the attempt to arouse her jealousy, and the threat to do some mischief to himself.

But by placing his fair in a grotto the poet loses the obstruction which is the *raison d'être* of the *paraclausithyron*, namely, the barred door. The lover has no insuperable obstacle between himself and his beloved. He may visit her grotto at will; it is only the law of the particular poetic form which restrains him.

> I'll sing to Amaryllis while my goats,
> Tended by Tityrus, browse along the hill.
> O Tityrus, my belov'd one, feed my goats,
> And lead them to the spring, and oh, beware
> The horns of yonder tawny Libyan buck!

Fair Amaryllis, why no more wilt thou call to me,
Me thy 'darling,' and peep from thy bower? Am I loathed by thee?

Doth my nose seem flat, and my beard like a goat's, when thou look'st on my face?
Girl, thou wilt drive me to hang myself for this disgrace.

Lo! here, from whence thou bad'st me to gather them, half a score
Of apples I bring, and to-morrow I'll bring thee as many more.

Ah, look on my grievous woe! Ah, would that I now might turn
Into the bee humming there, and win to thy shy retreat,
Lightly thridding the ivy that clings and the sheltering fern!

Now know I Love, that dreadful god. A lioness' teat
He sucked, and was reared by his dam in an oakwood's deep recess.

He drives his dart to the bone; I am smouldering in his heat.

Dark-browed girl of the lovely glance, thou daintiness,
Fold thy goatherd to thee that so I may kiss thee, dear;
For 'e'en in an empty kiss is a sweet delightfulness.'

Thou'lt make me rend in shreds the coronal I bring here,
Of ivy and fragrant parsley and roses wreathed, for thee.
What shall I do, alas, poor wretch! Wilt thou not give ear?

I'll doff my cloak and leap from yon headland into the sea,
Where Olpis the fisherman watches for tunny down in the bay;
And if I be drowned — ah well — e'en so thou art dear to me.

This bitter thing did I learn as I mused upon thee one day;
For a poppy-petal I smote as it lay on my forearm smooth,
And the love-in-absence made no smear but withered away.

Groio the sieve-divineress told me erewhile the truth,
She who would gather the hay by my side as I mowed on the lea;
For all my heart is thine, but thou reck'st not of me, poor youth.

A white she-goat with her twins have I been keeping for thee;
But Erithacis begs for them oft — she is darker of hue than thou,
And yet I will give them to her, for thou but playest with me.

My right eye quivers — shall I see her now?
Here by this pine I'll throw me down and sing;

Perchance she'll cast on me a pitying look;
Surely her heart is not of adamant.

Hippomenes yearned the maid to wed;
Apples he took and ran.
Love's wave went o'er Atalanta's head
When she beheld the man.

Melampus the prophet drove the neat
From Othrys to Pylos town,
And Alphesibœa's mother sweet
In Bias' arms lay down.

Adonis, upon the mountain-side,
So maddened with love's unrest
Love's goddess, that e'en in death he'll bide
For ever on her breast.

Happy Endymion is, I trow,
Who sleepeth and waketh not,
And ye profane, ye shall never know
Iasion's happy lot.

My head is aching, but what carest thou?
I'll sing no more, but lay me down and die;
And wolves shall batten on my flesh. May that
Be sweet to thee as honey in the mouth!

— J. H. Hallard [82]

Undeniably the poet here occasionally passes beyond the horizon of Sicilian shepherds. Though the gifts with which

[82] From *The Idylls of Theocritus, with the Fragments, Bion and Moschus*, by J. H. Hallard. Reprinted by permission of Messrs. George Routledge and Sons, Ltd.

the shepherd seeks to allure his beloved are genuinely rural, though the motif "he loves me, he loves me not" and the sieve-divineress fit into the surroundings, yet the mass of mythological erudition put into the mouth of the shepherd in the last stanzas is incongruous in its effect: such erudition was in no way usual even in ancient readers.

A much more serious departure from the realism of the mime is involved, however, when the poet masks himself and his poet friends as shepherds without altering the natural coarseness of shepherd society. This he does in his seventh poem, *The Harvest-Home*, the longest and most beautiful of his rural mimes. Even in antiquity it was recognized that Theocritus introduces himself into this poem under the mask of the cowherd Simichidas. Simichidas modestly acknowledges that he is as little qualified to compete with the noble Sicelidas of Samos and with Philetas in song as is a frog to compete with a cicada: here the celebrated elegiac poet, Philetas of Cos, is openly named, and Sicelidas is but a transparent alias, for the highly gifted Hellenistic epigrammatist Asclepiades of Samos is often elsewhere referred to by the pseudonym which he himself elected to use. We are unable to raise the veil in which the poet has concealed the other personages of the poem; this is the case with the goatherd Lycidas, who is the outstanding person in the poem and is portrayed with thorough realism.

Lycidas is coming:

. . . and none had deemed,
Which beheld him, that other he was, for a goat-herd of goat-herds he seemed.
For over his shoulders was hung a goatskin, close in the hair,
Shaggy and tawny, and clung the scent of the rennet there;
And folded about his breast, by a plaited girdle clasped,
Was an old worn mantle-vest, and a cudgel his right hand grasped,
Wild-olive, a twisted staff. In his eyes a quiet smile
Shone; flashed his teeth as the laugh on his lips played all the while.

— A. S. Way [83]

Contemporaries must easily have recognized the poet behind the mask, and it must have afforded them a special pleasure to see literary personages transferred to the world of shepherds. Theocritus' example found many diligent followers. But even Vergil's disguised shepherds cannot play their rôle with the naturalness of those of Theocritus, and the shepherd's dress finally becomes merely a banal masquerade costume.

The Harvest-Home is unfortunately too long and requires explanation in too many details to permit its reproduction here, but it must nevertheless be treated at some length. Theocritus tells of an invitation he has received to a harvest festival in Cos. On a hot day in late summer he sets out with two companions for the estate of Phrasidemus. Many of the

[83] From *Theocritus, Bion and Moschus*, by A. S. Way. Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company.

local landmarks which he names have been found on the island of Cos, as, for example, the fountain Burina and Mount Oromedon; other names he alters but slightly. The walkers meet the goatherd Lycidas, described above, and after a bit of teasing repartee Simichidas-Theocritus challenges the goatherd to a singing match. Lycidas sings a propempticon (prayer for a prosperous voyage) to his beloved Ageanax, who has sailed for Mitylene, and closes his song with a pretty fairy tale of western Greece. Simichidas jestingly invokes Pan to decree a happy outcome to the love of Aratus (not the poet!) for Philinus. By surrendering his shepherd's crook, Lycidas smilingly confesses himself beaten, and he takes his leave from Simichidas and his comrades, who then continue their journey to Phrasidemus'. The description of the comfortable relaxation at the harvest festival after the long hot walk constitutes the last and most beautiful part of the poem. The closing lines are a short invocation to Demeter, goddess of the harvest.

. . . so did we there
On earth-strewn couches deep with the odorous lentisk recline,
And rejoicing lay on a heap of the fresh-stripped leaves of the vine.
Over our heads on high did many a poplar wave,
Many an elm: hard by, from the Wood-maids' hallowed cave
The water was streaming, falling, murmuring dreamily;
And from shadowy bough aye calling their ceaseless challenge-cry

Sun-scorched cicadas screamed: far off, amid tangled thorn
Hidden, the dwarf owl seemed in sleep to mutter and mourn.
The larks and the finches were singing, ring-doves moaned
soft and low:
Bees yellow-banded were winging their flight o'er the brook
to and fro.
Of the golden summer-tide and her gifts breathed all the air.
Pears rolled to my feet, by my side in the green grass scat-
tered there were
Apples uncounted; and store of the wildwood fruit bowed
low
Earthward the branches that bore the amethyst-purple sloe:
And the cap from the wine-jar we tore that was sealed four
years ago.
Nymphs, warders of Castaly's Spring, of Parnassus' twin
crag-towers,
Did Cheiron the ancient bring such bowl as this of ours
Unto Pholus' cave in the rocks, and set it by Herakles
ever?
Or was that strong lord of flocks, who dwelt by Anapus the
river,
Polyphemus, who hurled uprooted mountains at ships on the
deep,
By such nectar beguiled, that he footed the dance mid the
folds of his sheep?
Nymphs, had they ever such draught as for us ye deigned
to pour,
Such as we by the altar quaffed of the Queen of the Thresh-
ing-floor?
Oh to plant yet again on the heap of her corn the great fan,
while she stands

Smiling, with sheaves and the sleep-laden poppies filling her hands!

— A. S. Way [84]

No poet before Theocritus or after him has been able to describe with so convincing a power the ineffable charm of an Indian summer's day in Greece: its soothing softness and sated satisfaction, the murmur of fountains and the cooling shade of the trees, the twittering of birds, the chirping of cicadas, the hum of bees, and the gentle falling of the luxuriantly ripening fruit. In feeling for nature and in love of it, Theocritus stands practically alone among the Greek poets; at best only Aristophanes can compare with him in individual descriptions. To the city-dwellers of unattractive Alexandria, who had grown estranged from the manifestations of nature, these verses must have sounded like melodies of another world.

To the rural mimes of Theocritus there must now be added three urban mimes, whose charm is even more apparent to the modern reader. They relate to the lower middle class from which the author himself had sprung, and he represents its life and activity in as simple and unadorned a fashion as he had that of the goatherds and cowherds. The fifteenth poem, *Women at the Feast of Adonis*, has Alexandria as its setting, though the two chief persons are

[84] From *Theocritus, Bion and Moschus*, by A. S. Way. Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company.

Syracusans, as they proudly aver when a stranger in the crowd chides them for their broad accent.

Gorgo comes to Praxinoe's house to accompany her to the royal palace where Adonis lies in state. After vivid complaints about their respective husbands and a heated squabble over the servants, the two women start out, each accompanied by a maid. I quote the first portion:

GORGO

Praxinoe in?

PRAXINOE

My dear! at last! I am here, quite ready.

GORGO

It's a marvel I ever got here!

PRAXINOE

Eunoe, a chair for the lady.

Fetch a cushion.

GORGO

It does very well as it is.

PRAXINOE

Sit down for a spell.

GORGO

O why can't folks stop at home? I scarce got hither alive!
Crowds everywhere aimlessly roam, and hundreds and hundreds that drive!
High boots here, and there regimentals — and oh, the road
Is endless! 'Tis too far, where you have taken up your abode.

PRAXINOE

That madman it was! — took flight to the world's end: hither he came,
Took a hole, not a house, that we might not be neighbours: his only aim, —
The jealous brute — is to spite us: it's like him, always the same.

GORGO

Mind how you talk, my dear, of your husband — be careful, do,
When the little fellow is near! How hard he is looking at you!
All right, Zopyrion, my pet! She doesn't mean Pa, doesn't Ma!
He takes notice — it *is* early yet, by our Lady! Pretty Papa!

PRAXINOE

That " pretty papa " t'other day — though I *told* him to take special care,
Soap and rouge being wanted — away he goes to the shop, and there
He buys me — the booby, the great long looby brings salt, I declare!

GORGO

Mine's like him, a waster — bought five fleeces yesterday, paid
Seven shillings apiece for — naught but dog-skins, old bags frayed
Into rags! Good cash did he pay for trash! Oh, the trouble it made!

Well, come, get on your shawl and your mantle, and come with me
Away to Ptolemy's hall, to our rich king's palace, to see
The " Adonis." I understand the queen has provided a show
Most splendid.

PRAXINOE

Of course, " with grand folks everything's grand," you know.

GORGO

What sights you'll have seen to report to the stay-at-homes! Come, my dear!

PRAXINOE

No hurry. " The go-easy sort keep holidays all the year."
Eunoe, pick up your sewing! Slut, leave it about, if you dare!
Those cats will always be going for a soft bed anywhere.
Wake up! bring water, and quickly — first water! She's brought soap-paste!
Never mind, spread it on — not thickly like that, you creature of waste!
Pour over the water — don't splash! You wretch, you are wetting my dress!
That will do. Well, I *have* had a wash — a treat for the Gods — such a mess!
Now, bring it to me — where is it? — the key of the big clothes-press?
(*Opens clothes-press and puts on new dress.*)

GORGO

My dear, that dress, pleated full, becomes you indeed, I must say!

Do tell me — how much, when the wool came back from the loom, did you pay?

PRAXINOE

O, don't make me think of it! — more than eight pounds silver it cost!
And the work I put into it! — wore out my soul in the making, almost.

GORGO

Well, it *is* a success! It's all that heart could desire!

PRAXINOE

Very kind
Of you. (*To Eunoe.*) Now, bring me my shawl, and my hat — put it on straight, mind!
(*To the child.*) No, I'm not taking chickie to-day — there's a bogey-horse — bites little boys!
Cry as much as you like — cry away! I'll not have you lamed for your noise.
Now, let us be off. Nurse, take him, and play with the little one.
Call in the dog, and make the street-door fast when I'm gone.
(*They pass out into the street with their maids.*)

— A. S. WAY [85]

In a manner quite unique the poet lets us join the ladies in their walk to the royal castle. He himself speaks not a word; only out of the uninterrupted chatter of the women do we learn how they pass into the press on the crowded

[85] From *Theocritus, Bion and Moschus*, by A. S. Way. Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company.

street, how a mounted guard of the king almost rides them down, how they become afraid of losing each other. An old woman of their acquaintance comes out of the castle and is greeted briefly. The bustle at the palace gate grows more feverish. Praxinoe's dress is torn, but with the help of a stranger, who is likewise introduced by his conversation, they succeed in making their way into the palace and give voluble expression to their wonder at the magnificence of the hall and at Adonis lying in state. A gruff stranger seeks to stem their torrent of talk, but in vain. His mocking remarks on their broad Doric receive an angry reply from sharp-tongued Gorgo:

> Good heavens! who are you with your hectoring? What if we chat as we choose?
> Order your servants! Lecturing ladies of Syracuse!
> We, let me tell you, Sir Clever, are from Corinth, the ancient city,
> Like Bellerophon — wasn't he Greek? Good Peloponnesian we speak;
> And if Dorian women may never talk Dorian speech, it's a pity!
>
> — A. S. Way [86]

Her chatter is silenced only when a female singer prepares to chant the *Hymn of Adonis*. Adonis is one of the oriental divinities whose sudden demise in the bloom of youth is an embodiment of the annual death of nature under

[86] From *Theocritus, Bion and Moschus*, by A. S. Way. Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company.

the pitiless glare of the summer sun of the South. The delicate and handsome youth is the beloved of Aphrodite; against her advice he hunts the wild boar in the mountains, and is torn to death by the beast's tusks. Passionately the goddess bewails the beloved youth, beautiful even as he lies on his bier, and annually mankind repeats the lying in state and the wailing in his honor. The cult of Adonis came to the Greeks early; Sappho knew of it, and its practice at Athens is proven by a reference in Plato to the " gardens of Adonis " — pots in which plants which shot up and withered quickly were set out to be used when the god lay in state. At Athens, as probably in the majority of Greek cities, Adonis had no state cult, but his festival was an important event for the women, celebrated with impressive ritual and passionate lamentation. In the royal city of the Ptolemies it became a magnificent spectacle in which, as elsewhere, women took a particularly important part; according to Theocritus it is Queen Arsinoë who has arranged the splendid celebration in the palace. But now Theocritus does not reproduce the real Adonis hymn; that was prohibited by the exigencies of epic meter. The Adonis myth, however, is interwoven with a description of the ritual, after the manner of Callimachus' hymn to Apollo and Demeter (see p. 130). There is an elaborate description of the couches on which Adonis and Aphrodite lie. They are surrounded by green foliage, about whose tendrils Erotes fly; the quickly withering Adonis plants, jars of unguent and cakes in various

forms are heaped about the dead god. It is only at the close that the chant takes on the character of a cult hymn:

Be propitious, Adonis dear, and for next year gracious be thou!
Then again will we welcome thee here with such joy as we welcome thee now.

— A. S. Way [87]

After the song there follows only a short epilogue by Gorgo, who suddenly recalls that her husband is waiting at home for his meal:

My dear, it's beyond poor me! Happy woman, to know so pat
Such a great song! Thrice happy she with a lovely voice like that!
Well, well, back again must we get. My lord is dinnerless yet;
And the man's all vinegar then — he is quite unapproachable.
Good-bye, dear Adonis, and when you return, may you find us well!

— A. S. Way [87]

The fourteenth poem also, *The Love of Cynisca*, has relations with Alexandria, although its setting is not placed there. Aeschines, no longer a young man, complains to a friend of pangs of love. His lady, Cynisca, has bestowed her love upon young Lycus (Wolf). At a banquet, which is

[87] From *Theocritus, Bion and Moschus*, by A. S. Way. Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company.

vividly described, Aeschines became convinced that Cynisca loved Lycus and, overpowered by jealousy, he struck her. At this treatment the girl fled; for two months he has awaited her return in vain and he is now determined to go forth into the world. Thereupon his companion advises him to take military service with Ptolemy, and closes the conversation with spirited praise of the king:

THYONICHUS

Would your desires had been more fortunate,
My Æschines! But if you must abroad,
The best pay-master for a free-born man
Is Ptolemy.

ÆSCHINES

And what is he besides,
Your 'best pay-master for a free-born man'?

THYONICHUS

A kindly man, a friend of art and song,
A lover, and the pink of courtesy;
A man that knows his friend, his enemy
Still better, giving largess unto many,
And ne'er refusing to a suppliant
Aught that a king should grant. But, Æschines,
We must not always ask. So, if you like
On your right shoulder the cloak's tip to pin,
And standing firm will boldly bear the brunt
Of sturdy targeteers, away to Egypt!
We all get grizzled from the temples downward,

And frosty age creeps slowly to the chin.
Come, let's be doing while our legs are young!
— J. H. HALLARD [88]

The praise of Ptolemy is clearly reminiscent of the older poem in praise of the king (see p. 282), but here the effectiveness is enhanced because the speech is put into the mouth of a simple man. The motifs of the poem show close affinities to New Comedy: maltreatment of a sweetheart and going forth into the world because of disappointed love occur not infrequently in Menander and his rivals. But the tone of the mime is a shade cruder and the plentiful use of proverbs is a clever way of imitating the speech of the simple man.

But the crowning success of Theocritus' urban mimes is the second poem, *The Incantation,* which I shall quote in spite of its length. In none of the other poems can we so clearly perceive Theocritus' relation to Sophron. A scholiast definitely states that the material is taken from the mimes of Sophron. There are several verbal parallels, and the name of one of the minor persons, the serving maid Thestylis, the poet took from the work of his compatriot.

But, after all, Theocritus' indebtedness extends only to the framework of the action, which is a nocturnal incantation performed by women. From the slight remains we possess of Sophron's mime, it is quite improbable that unhappy

[88] From *The Idylls of Theocritus, with the Fragments, Bion and Moschus,* by J. H. Hallard. Reprinted by permission of Messrs. George Routledge and Sons, Ltd.

love was made by Sophron the occasion for the nocturnal magic. The love motif and the lonely figure of the bourgeoise girl, who has fallen a victim to the seduction of an athletic hero but has been deserted by him, are taken from New Comedy. The charm of New Comedy is here blended with that of the mime even more delicately than in *The Love of Cynisca.* The setting of the story, which may be inferred from certain individual features, is, like that of *The Harvest-Home*, the island Cos. The heroine, Simaetha, is a girl of the lower middle class, without family, who lives with an old servant. It is not stated that she plies a trade, but her humble social status is indicated by her association with a Thracian nurse and the mother of a flute-girl, as well as the circumstance that she borrows a wrap for the festival from a neighbor. The social standing of her handsome lover, Delphis, is considerably higher. He belongs to the world of fashion, which is busied with sports, carousals, and love intrigues. The girl took the initiative by inviting him into her house. Despite his handsome speeches, his connection with her was from the start only a passing adventure; for her it is her whole existence. The entire poem is a monologue by Simaetha. In the dark night, attended only by her old servant, before a flickering flame in her courtyard she practises all the weird magic arts, arts which are in great part still current among common folk, in order to win back her lover or else to punish him. Then she dismisses her maid and pours out her plaint before Selene. The poet

makes frequent and effective use of a refrain verse at intervals; this device is occasionally employed in the shepherd poems also. The line *Turn, magic wheel, and draw my Love to me,* repeated ten times, divides the first portion into strophes of four verses each; the second part is divided into strophes of five verses [89] by the line *Bethink thee, Lady Moon, whence came my love,* repeated twelve times.

Simætha

Where are the bay-leaves? — bring them, Thestylis —
And where the drugs that work love-witcheries?
Go wreathe the bowl with yarn of crimson stain,
That I may fetter Him who cruel is.

These twelve days past he hath not come to me,
Nor knows he if alive or dead I be;
He hath not beaten at my door, the churl;
Some new Love holds his fickle fantasy.

To-morrow to the wrestling-school I'll go,
And to his face upbraid him with my woe;
But now shall glamour bind him. Brightly shine,
Moon, for to thee will I sing soft and low.

I sing also to nether Hecate,
Her whom the trembling hounds with terror see
Coming athwart the barrows and the blood —
All hail, dread goddess! bide thou near to me.

[89] This statement is true of the original Greek; Mr. Hallard, whose version is given here, alters the arrangement.

Make my spell strong as that of Circe fair,
Or Perimede of the golden hair,
Who knew all secret poisons of the earth
And puissant as Medea's deadly snare.
Turn, magic wheel, and draw my Love to me.

The barley first shall burn in Delphis' name;
Sprinkle it, Thestylis. — Would'st mock my shame,
Thou shameless one? Whither have flown thy wits?
Say: ' Delphis ' bones I sprinkle in the flame.'
Turn, magic wheel, and draw my Love to me.

Delphis hath wronged me, and I burn this bay
In name of Delphis; as it wastes away,
Crackling in sudden flare, no ashes seen,
So be his flesh to fiery flames a prey!
Turn, magic wheel, and draw my Love to me.

Lo, as I melt this wax, and Heaven implore,
So may love melt the Myndian to the core;
And as love's goddess whirls this brazen wheel,
So whirl she *him* one day about my door!
Turn, magic wheel, and draw my Love to me.

The chaff I'll burn now; Artemis, thy spell
Can shake the very adamant of Hell. —
Hark, Thestylis, the dogs howl through the city!
The Queen is at the cross-roads — beat the bell.
Turn, magic wheel, and draw my Love to me.

Lo, now the winds and seas asleep are laid,
But my heart's ache sleeps not and is not stayed,

Ah me, for I am all aflame for him
That left me not a wife nor yet a maid!
Turn, magic wheel, and draw my Love to me.

Whether with girl or boy my leman lie,
Thrice will I make libation, thrice will cry:
'May his new Love be left, as Theseus' bride
Was left on Dia in the days gone by!'
Turn, magic wheel, and draw my Love to me.

Upon Arcadia's hills a herb doth grow
Whereof the fleet mares taste, and madness know;
May I see Delphis from the wrestling-school
Rush to my threshold, maddened even so!
Turn, magic wheel, and draw my Love to me.

This tassel once from Delphis' cloak was shed;
The blazing fire shall burn it every shred.
Ah, grievous love, why hast thou clung to me
Leech-like, until of all my life I'm bled!
Turn, magic wheel, and draw my Love to me.

An eft I'll bray to-morrow and shall bear
A philtre unto him. — Now hie thee there
With these weird herbs and crush them, Thestylis,
High on his door-post while the signs be fair;
And, hark thou, when about it, bear in mind
To spit and say: 'Here Delphis' bones I grind!'
Turn, magic wheel, and draw my Love to me.

Now she is gone, I will weep for my love and my miseries.
Where to begin? Who wrought them? Eubulus' daughter young,

Anaxo, basket on head, to the grove of Artemis
Went with a wild-beast train — a lioness there-among.
Bethink thee, Lady Moon, whence came my love.

Theucarides' Thracian nurse (dear soul, she is now no more),
Who dwelt anigh my home, besought me to go with her there
To view the pageant. I went, and a long linen robe I wore,
And over its folds was flung Clearista's mantle fair.
Bethink thee, Lady Moon, whence came my love.

Half way, by the homestead of Lycon, I saw together go
Delphis and Eudamippus; their beards were as golden flame
Of the everlasting flowers, and their breasts had a brighter glow
Than thine, O Moon; for the youths from the glory of wrestling came.
Bethink thee, Lady Moon, whence came my love.

I saw, I maddened, I loved, deep-smitten unto the core,
And little I recked of the pageant, my beauty wasted away;
And I wot not how I won to my home, but fever sore
Shattered me on my couch for many a night and day.
Bethink thee, Lady Moon, whence came my love.

My flesh waxed e'en like saffron in hue, and all my hair
Fell from my head; nought other than skin and bone was I.
To what old witch's abode did I not often repair,
But get no healing thence! — and the days went ever by.
Bethink thee, Lady Moon, whence came my love.

To my slave-girl then at last I spake, and my words were sooth:

'Thestylis, find me a cure for love and its grievous blight:
The Myndian hath me in thrall; go thou and watch for the youth
By the wrestling-school, for there to seat him is his delight.
Bethink thee, Lady Moon, whence came my love.

And when thou see'st him alone, nod lightly and breathe in his ear:
"Simætha bids thee to her," then lead him hither,' I said.
Swiftly she hied her and brought the smooth-limbed boy to me here;
And when I beheld him cross my threshold with nimble tread, —
Bethink thee, Lady Moon, whence came my love.

Colder than snow I grew, and the sweat in rain-like streams
Brake from my brow, and not so much could I say to him
As a slumbering child may lisp to its mother beheld in dreams;
But like to an image of wax I was rigid in every limb.
Bethink thee, Lady Moon, whence came my love.

False-hearted he gazed upon me, then cast his eyes on the floor,
And sat him down on my bed, and sitting there thus began:
'Simætha, thy summons outstripped my coming here to thy door
As little as I one day Philinus the fair outran.
Bethink thee, Lady Moon, whence came my love.

Yea, by sweet Love, I had come unbidden at fall of night
With boon-fellows two or three, the dearest I could find —

In my bosom the wine-god's fruit, on my head the poplar white,
Heracles' chosen leaf with fillets of purple twined.
Bethink thee, Lady Moon, whence came my love.

And well for you both had it been had ye opened, for all youths say
That comely and swift am I; and sleep my soul had assuaged,
Had I kissed thy fair mouth once; but had barred doors kept us away,
Then surely had torch and axe their warfare against you waged.
Bethink thee, Lady Moon, whence came my love.

The Cyprian chiefly, I ween, my thanks for this boon hath earned,
And, next to the Cyprian, thou who hast reft me from the fire,
Bidding me hither come who am nigh unto ashes burned;
For fiercer than Lipara's flame is the flame of love's desire.
Bethink thee, Lady Moon, whence came my love.

Oft hath it urged from her bower the maiden with passion mad,
And the bride from her lord's warm couch.' He spake; I heard and was glad,
And took him, alas! by the hand and softly drew him alow
On the soft bed by my side, and our limbs began to glow,
And hotter became our cheeks and sweetly whispered we . . .
But wherefore blab the rest, dear Lady Moon, to thee?
Love's rites were accomplished; we there both tasted of love's delight;

And till but of late I found ever favour and grace in his sight,
As he did in mine; but to-day, at what hour the early Dawn
Up from the sea to the sky by her fleet-foot steeds was drawn,
The mother of Samian Philista the flute-girl hither came,
And told me of many things, but chiefly of Delphis' flame;
But whether to girl or boy my leman his homage pays,
She knew not rightly, she said, — this alone: that in *some* Love's praise
He aye bade pour of the wine unmixed, and fled in the end,
Vowing to deck with flowers the house of his ' darling friend.'
These were the stranger's words, and they're true, for afore-time he
Came oft and would oft-whiles leave his oil-flask here with me.
Alas! twelve days have gone, yet I have beheld him not.
Some new fancy hath ta'en him and me hath he quite forgot.
But now shall love-charms bind him; or, if he wrong me more,
And knock not at mine, by the Fates, he shall knock at Hades' door;
For belike 'tis for him, O Queen, dire drugs in my coffer lie,
Whose use an Assyrian stranger learned me in days gone by.

Farewell to thee now, O Lady! and turn thy steeds to the sea.
With a soul ever steadfast I will endure my hapless plight.
Farewell, thou shining goddess, Moon! and farewell, ye,
Ye other fires that follow the chariot of tranquil Night!

— J. H. HALLARD [90]

[90] From *The Idylls of Theocritus, with the Fragments, Bion and Moschus*, by J. H. Hallard. Reprinted by permission of Messrs. George Routledge and Sons, Ltd.

In this poem, as it seems to me, an age-old yet perennially new poetic motif is developed in a straightforward manner, without erudite flourishes or overrefinement of style. The maid who surrenders herself freely to her beloved, strong in the faith that their mutual love will abide forever, and then must needs experience man's fickleness, has been a subject for innumerable poets; but seldom has she been portrayed more simply and impressively than by Theocritus. The weird wizardry by means of which the forsaken maiden seeks to resuscitate a love that is dead forms a somber and impressive background for the brilliant glow of her short romance. The resigned confession at the close, "I will endure my hapless plight," shows that Simaetha herself really has no faith in the effectiveness of her magic, in spite of the earnestness with which she applies herself to it. Only seldom does the poet put words into her mouth which are beyond the mental range of a simple girl of the people. The realism of the mime is consistently maintained. The very helplessness with which she begins to relate the story of her passion is touchingly true to life.

Particularly distinctive of Theocritus is the feeling for nature which is manifested so charmingly in this poem. The scene is bathed in the pale light of the moon, and the passage in which Simaetha contrasts the restless longing of her heart with the calm quiet of wind and sea is worthy of Sappho herself.

Theocritus was a great favorite, as is best shown by the

fact that he was soon imitated. He himself issued no collection of his poems. When the grammarian Artemidorus, in the time of Sulla, gathered all the bucolic poems he could find into a collection, he included under the name of Theocritus two poems (VIII and IX) which are proven not to be Theocritus' by crude violations of Theocritean verse technique and Doric dialect. The two spurious shepherd songs were included as Theocritean in the collection which Vergil used; he employs them exactly as if they were genuine. In other respects also the collection of Artemidorus was fatal to the conception of bucolic poetry. No distinction was made between rural and urban mimes: Vergil, therefore, borrows from both in the same poem. Artemidorus' collection included a poem in which a shepherd is mocked by a courtesan of the city, and the poet openly takes sides against the peasant bumpkin. Finally, beside the rural and urban mimes are poems of Theocritus which have nothing whatever in common with them; such are the *Charites* (*Graces*), the *Panegyric of Ptolemy*, and those which use heroic material.

Of the poets who emulated Theocritus we know two by name, Moschus and Bion, but we possess no real shepherd poems from their pens.[91]

We have dealt with the *Europa*, an epyllion of Moschus (see p. 169). Of Bion, who lived toward the end of the second century B.C., I must quote at least the greater

[91] Fragments of shepherd poetry from Bion are preserved only in the *Anthology* of Stobaeus.

portion of the *Adonis*. This work is a fuller and richer development of the *Hymn to Adonis* given in the fifteenth poem of Theocritus. To Theocritus too is due the liberal use of the refrain. Here also the mythical story, which assumes much fuller proportions than in Theocritus, is interwoven with the ritual in a peculiar manner. The poem possesses a certain effete and stifling passion:

I

I mourn for Adonis — Adonis is dead,
Fair Adonis is dead and the Loves are lamenting.
Sleep, Cypris, no more on thy purple-strewed bed!
Arise, wretch stoled in black, — beat thy breast unrelenting,
And shriek to the worlds, ' Fair Adonis is dead! '

II

I mourn for Adonis — the Loves are lamenting.
He lies on the hills in his beauty and death, —
The white tusk of a boar has transpierced his white thigh.
Cytherea grows mad at his thin gasping breath,
While the black blood drips down on the pale ivory,
And his eye-balls lie quenched with the weight of his brows,
The rose fades from his lips, and upon them just parted
The kiss dies the goddess consents not to lose,
Though the kiss of the Dead cannot make her glad-hearted:
He knows not who kisses him dead in the dews.

III

I mourn for Adonis — the Loves are lamenting.
Deep, deep in the thigh, is Adonis's wound,
But a deeper, is Cypris's bosom presenting.
The youth lieth dead while his dogs howl around,
And the nymphs weep aloud from the mists of the hill,
And the poor Aphrodité, with tresses unbound,
All dishevelled, unsandalled, shrieks mournful and shrill
Through the dusk of the groves. The thorns, tearing her feet,
Gather up the red flower of her blood which is holy,
Each footstep she takes, — and the valleys repeat
The sharp cry she utters, and draw it out slowly.
She calls on her spouse, her Assyrian, on him
Her own youth, while the dark blood spreads over his body,
The chest taking hue from the gash in the limb,
And the bosom once ivory, turning to ruddy.

IV

Ah, ah, Cytherea! the Loves are lamenting.
She lost her fair spouse, and so lost her fair smile —
When he lived she was fair by the whole world's consenting,
Whose fairness is dead with him! woe worth the while!
All the mountains above and the oaklands below
Murmur, ah, ah Adonis! the streams overflow
Aphrodité's deep wail, — river-fountains in pity
Weep soft in the hills, and the flowers as they blow
Redden outward with sorrow, while all hear her go
With the song of her sadness through mountain and city.

V

Ah, ah, Cytherea! Adonis is dead,
Fair Adonis is dead — Echo answers, Adonis!
Who weeps not for Cypris, when bowing her head
She stares at the wound where it gapes and astonies?
— When, ah, ah! — she saw how the blood ran away
And empurpled the thigh, and, with wild hands flung out,
Said with sobs, ' Stay, Adonis! unhappy one, stay,
Let me feel thee once more — let me ring thee about
With the clasp of my arms, and press kiss into kiss!
Wait a little, Adonis, and kiss me again,
For the last time, beloved, — and but so much of this
That the kiss may learn life from the warmth of the strain!
— Till thy breath shall exude from thy soul to my mouth,
To my heart, — and the love-charm I, once more receiving,
May drink thy love in it, and keep of a truth
That one kiss in the place of Adonis the living.
Thou fliest me, mournful one, fliest me far,
My Adonis, and seekest the Acheron portal, —
To Hell's cruel King goest down with a scar,
While I weep and live on like a wretched immortal,
And follow no step! — O Persephoné, take him,
My husband! — thou'rt better and brighter than I,
So all beauty flows down to thee! *I* cannot make him
Look up at my grief, — there's despair in my cry,
Since I wail for Adonis who died to me . . . died to me . . .
— Then, I fear *thee!* — Art thou dead, my Adored?
Passion ends like a dream in the sleep that's denied to me, —
Cypris is widowed, — the Loves seek their lord

All the house through in vain! Charm of cestus has ceased
With thy clasp! — oh, too bold in the hunt past preventing,
Aye, mad, thou so fair . . . to have strife with a beast! ' —
Thus the goddess wailed on — and the Loves are lamenting.

VI

Ah, ah, Cytherea! Adonis is dead.
She wept tear after tear, with the blood which was shed, —
And both turned into flowers for the earth's garden-close,
Her tears, to the wind flower, — his blood, to the rose.

VII

I mourn for Adonis — Adonis is dead.
Weep no more in the woods, Cytherea, thy lover!
So, well! make a place for his corse in thy bed,
With the purples thou sleepest in, under and over.
He's fair, though a corse — a fair corse . . . like a sleeper.
Lay him soft in the silks he had pleasure to fold,
When, beside thee at night, holy dreams deep and deeper
Enclosed his young life on the couch made of gold.
Love him still, poor Adonis! cast on him together
The crowns and the flowers! since he died from the place,
Why let all die with him — let the blossoms go wither,
Rain myrtles and olive-buds down on his face!
Rain the myrrh down, let all that is best fall a-pining,
Since the myrrh of his life from thy keeping is swept! —
— Pale he lay, thine Adonis, in purples reclining, —
The Loves raised their voices around him and wept. . . .

— Elizabeth Barrett Browning

The final portion describes the activity of the Erotes about the body of Adonis lying in state, and the laments of a whole series of other divinities, Hymenaeus, Charites, Moirae. I omit this, inasmuch as it contributes no new motifs of any significance. Undoubtedly the continued refrain of the lament grows tedious, but the tediousness is studied. The poet would have us experience the wild plaints of the devotees of the god which are kept up until grief itself is exhausted.

It is a far cry from the mimes of Theocritus to the *Lament for Adonis* of the last of the bucolic poets — for as such does an anonymous dirge extravagantly celebrate Bion. But we have another poet whose work is very closely related to the Syracusan's mimes. The *Mimiambi* of Herodas, of which we had previously possessed but insignificant fragments, were restored to us by an unusually extensive and well preserved papyrus, in the year 1891. Opinions still vary widely about his personality, his home, his period, for an unlucky accident has brought it about that the eighth *mimiambus*, *The Dream*, in which the poet analyzes his rivals and himself, is badly mutilated and, in spite of the great acumen applied to it, has not yet been certainly restored. Even the form of his name, Herodas, Herondas, or, as has been lately advocated, Herodes, is still under dispute. The spelling is not unimportant, for it furnishes a clue to the poet's origin. If his name was Herodas, which I consider practically certain, he cannot have come from Ionia or Attica.

The island of Cos has been suggested as his home, on grounds not entirely conclusive; Ephesus, Athens, Alexandria have also been mentioned. Certain it is that two of his poems, the seventh and the fourth, have their setting in Cos; Cos would fully suit the first, in which Alexandria is mentioned as the wealthy and distant metropolis. On the other hand Cos, being Dorian, is excluded as the setting of the seventh by the use of the Ionic month-name *Taureon;* evidently a great Ionian city is to be thought of, Miletus or Ephesus. The best indication of the date seems to be offered by the mention of King Ptolemy Euergetes (246-222) [92] in the first poem, though this passage too is variously interpreted. This uncertainty in regard to date is unfortunate, because thereon depends Herodas' relation to Callimachus and Theocritus. Was he, as Herzog holds, an older contemporary and rival, or, as I provisionally assume, a successor by about a generation? It is to be hoped that future research will solve this riddle; I wish at least to indicate the difficulty, as Herodas is so interesting a literary personality.

The rediscovery of Herodas occurred in the period when realism was to the fore, and it was a cause of great joy to find that even antiquity had produced so genuine a realist. The very filth which is so common in some of his poems was looked upon as a special recommenda-

[92] Rudolf Herzog, the best authority on Cos, believes he can date the fourth poem between 290 and 270, but his proof has not been published.

tion. As a matter of fact Herodas' realism is rather doubtful. There are, to be sure, keenly observed pictures of contemporary life, with particular emphasis on the seamy side, but they are done in a form that is anything but realistic. Certainly, if sketches of contemporary London life were to be composed in the language and versification of Pope, or even of Spenser, they could not be termed realistic. Herodas, however, adopts the peculiar choliambic meter (scazon, from the old Ionian Hipponax, as had Callimachus in his *Iambi* [see p. 122]). But he goes much farther, in that he also employs the Ionic dialect, which had long been defunct. His poems teem with archaic words and forms, and were certainly quite unintelligible to the man in the street, particularly on the Dorian island of Cos. Herodas too, like the majority of his contemporaries, writes only for the select few who have literary background. With this in view we must reject the opinion, maintained by some, that the *mimiambi* are small dramas written for production in the theater. They could never have been understood by large audiences; they belong to drawing-room assemblages. Of course some of them could be produced in a form suitable for the theater. So could the Simaetha of Theocritus be presented on the stage; the magic rites might be performed before a flickering flame, by moonlight, to the accompaniment of the howling storm, and her mournful love plaint could be chanted. But for others scenic representation is quite out of the question. The charm of the

fourth poem, *Women Making Offerings and Sacrifice to Asclepius,* for example, consists essentially in the description and appreciation of the masterpieces in the Asclepieion at Cos, and it would indicate a shocking want of taste to represent on the stage copies of statues from the hands of the sons of Praxiteles, and paintings from the hand of Apelles. Herodas' *mimiambi* were intended for recitation, just as were the mimes of Theocritus and of Sophron before him. The name *mimiambi* signifies only that these iambi drew their material from the domain of the mime.

I shall begin by quoting the first of Herodas' poems, *The Go-between* or *The Procuress,* which is one of the poet's tamer efforts. This poem shows a very close relationship to Theocritus in various respects. The content is very simple and may be understood without commentary. Metriche, who lives alone with a single maid, is visited by Gyllis, an old woman who is an acquaintance of long standing. Gyllis had been employed by Gryllus, a young *bon vivant,* to secure Metriche's favor for him. After some introductory conversation, she acquits herself of this diplomatic mission with great skill. Favoring her cause is the circumstance that Metriche had received no word from Mandris, who had sailed to Egypt ten months before. But Metriche is very decided in her refusal of Gyllis' proposal; she purposes to remain faithful to Mandris. However, she does not take Gyllis' offer too much amiss; else she had not taken a cup of kindness with the old woman before she let her

go. Upon leaving, Gyllis comforts herself with the thought that other young beauties of her acquaintance will not prove so prudish. The view is generally accepted that Metriche is the wife of Mandris. This cannot be proven and seems improbable, for, if that were the situation, Metriche would certainly have had something to say, in her refusal, about her social status and of the sanctity of wedlock. Her relation to Mandris is the same as that of Simaetha to Delphis in the poem of Theocritus. She feels bound to the young man, however, and will not give him up though he has been long absent.

METRICHE (*to* Thracian)
Hark, girl! There's some one knocking at the door.
See who it is, — perhaps some visitor
From our country place.

THRACIAN (*shouting*)
Who knocked?

GYLLIS
I.

THRACIAN
Who are you?
Don't be afraid; come nearer.

GYLLIS
So I do.

THRACIAN
Who *are* you?

GYLLIS

I'm Philainion's mother dear,
Gyllis. Go tell your mistress that I'm here.

METRICHE

Let her in. Who is it?

THRACIAN

Gyllis.

METRICHE

Gyllis? Not
"Mamma"? Now, girl, be brisk! Well, and to what
Supreme good fortune, Gyllis, do I owe
This "angel's visit"? These five months or so
No soul, awake or sleeping, 's noticed you
Come near this doorway; by the Fates, it's true.

GYLLIS

My home's far off, child; then, the mud! — it lies
Thick in the streets, and reaches to one's thighs.
That weak I am, too, — like a fly! Dear, dear!
Age pulls us down, the shadow of death is near.

METRICHE

It's libelling Time to say so. Go along!
Why, you could crush one's life out, — you're so strong.

GYLLIS

Ah! mock away. You girls will have your fun;
But that won't warm you, when all's said and done.
Well, child, how long, now, in this widowed state,
Do you press a lonely couch, disconsolate?
Ten months have flown since Mandris went away
To Egypt, and no syllable from that day

To this he's sent you; he's forgotten *you*,
And drained the honeyed cup of love anew.
The goddess makes her home there; every kind
Of thing, both new and old, you're sure to find
In the land of Egypt: wealth, power, fame, repose,
Gymnasium, gold, young men, philosophers, shows,
The shrine of Brother and Sister,[93] the Good King,
Wine, the Museum, — every pleasant thing
The heart of man can wish for; women, there,
In number more — by Hades' Maid I swear —
Than all the stars Heaven's front does proudly wear,
Fair as those goddesses who once, to claim
The prize of beauty, unto Paris came,
— Hope they don't hear their names. Well, there you sit,
Hugging your chair. What do you think of it,
Poor girl? You'd better mind: you'll waste away,
Youth swallowed in the ashes of decay.
Look somewhere else, steer for another port
A day or two, and merrily resort
To a new friend. The ship that tries to ride
At a single anchor may not stem the tide.
If your first love is in his grave, why then
No mortal man can raise him up again.
Besides, you know, fine weather has a close,
And angry storms succeed; and no one knows
What hidden fortune future days may bring,
For human life's a most uncertain thing.
There's no one near us, is there?

[93] Ptolemy Philadelphus and his wife Arsinoë, both of whom were deified, are referred to here. Following v. Wilamowitz, I consider it impossible that the same Philadelphus is meant by "the Good King"; it must be his son Euergetes.

METRICHE

No one.

GYLLIS

Well,
Now you shall hear the news I came to tell.
Know that young Gryllos, Matakine's son
(She's daughter of Pataikios), — who has won
Five prizes at the games, once as a lad
At Pytho, twice at Corinth, where he had
The striplings all defeated, twice again
At Pisa, where he quite outboxed the men, —
Well off, the kind of man who'll never move
A twig from off the ground, unversed in love,
Safe as a signet, — at the late Returning
Of Mise [94] saw you, and his heart was burning
With frenzied love in no time. Night and day
He haunts my house, and ceases not to pray,
Weeping, for help to me, his "mother dear";
In fact, his passion's killing him, I fear.
Now, Metriche, my child, this little sin,
This *one*, you surely may commit; give in
To the Goddess, lest old age should find you out.
And you'll gain doubly; you'll enjoy, no doubt,
A pleasant time, and also you'll receive
A bigger sum than you could well believe.
Just think now. Be advised in this by me;
Please do, child, in the name of Destiny.

[94] Mise was originally a Phrygian goddess, associated with the circle of Demeter by the Orphics; here she appears as an understudy of ravished Persephone.

METRICHE

Gyllis, your grey hairs steal your wits away.
By Mandris' ship, which yet will come some day,
And by Demeter, saving you, I'ld stand
These speeches from no woman in the land;
For her sore words her bones should soon be sore,
And she should hate my threshold evermore.
Never bring such a tale upon your tongue
To me again, dear. Women gay and young
May listen to such harlotries as these;
Let Metriche, daughter of Pytheës,
Still " hug her chair." Nobody can poke fun
At Mandris. But enough! You " care for none
Of these things," as they say. (*To Thracian*) Girl, hark to me!
Wipe the black drinking-shell, and pour out three
Half-measures of neat wine, then, filling up
With water, hand our guest a brimming cup.

THRACIAN

There, Gyllis; there's your drink.

GYLLIS

Ah! bring it here.
I came about the festival, my dear,
And not to tempt you.

METRICHE

Yes, your wine's for that.

GYLLIS

I hope you've plenty of it in your vat,
For your sake. By Demeter, this stuff's fine;

Gyllis has never tippled better wine.
Well, fare you well, child. Mind you take all care
Of your own self. For me, be this my prayer,
That Myrtale and Sime still may keep
Young (yes, and gay), till Gyllis sleeps her sleep.
— Hugo Sharpley [95]

The manner of the little scene's opening, the arrival and welcoming of the guest, show an extraordinary similarity to Theocritus' *Women at the Feast of Adonis;* so also do the complaints about the long journey. In other respects the situation is nearer that of *The Incantation.* The athletic Gryllus (on whose good points the old woman so cleverly dilates) is a very replica of Theocritus' handsome Delphis. The only difference is that Gryllus employs Gyllis' assistance in an effort to win a sweetheart; Simaetha offers herself to Delphis. Herodas' moral tone is on a considerably lower level than Theocritus'. The tempting wage which Gyllis offers as her last trump is unthinkable in the case of Simaetha. Though we are gratified by Metriche's resolution in refusing the procuress' offer, our deeper sympathies do not go out to her as they do to Simaetha. There is real poetry in *The Incantation;* Herodas attracts only by the faithful representation of daily life. This representation is in fact excellent. Particularly delightful is the manner in which Gyllis, after she sees that her plan has failed, suddenly acts

[95] From *A Realist of the Aegean,* by Hugo Sharpley. Reprinted by permission of Mr. Philip Nutt.

as if her visit had nothing to do with her profession but was only a social call on the occasion of the festival. She is quite content to join in a cup of good wine and finally comforts herself with the thought that there are other fair women for her trade. In only one particular has the poet departed from his realistic faithfulness in the portrayal of the women. Mention of philosophers, the shrine of the deified Brother and Sister, the Good King, and especially the Museum, as attractions in Alexandria, is incongruous in the mouth of the old procuress. Clearly the poet was here unwilling to miss the opportunity of complimenting the royal court in Alexandria.

The second *mimiambus*, *The Pandar*, is much coarser but excellent of its kind. The entire poem is a speech delivered by the pandar Battaros before a jury in Cos; only one interruption is made, when the clerk of the court cites an ordinance. Battaros brings an action for damages against Thales, a wealthy produce merchant, who, like himself, is not a Coan citizen, but follows his calling there as a resident alien. Thales had made a night attack on Battaros' assignation house, had broken in the door and set it on fire, had beaten Battaros himself and forcibly carried off one of the inmates. Such descents on houses of joy on the part of young *bons vivants* were not uncommon in Greek cities, as we may see from the Roman imitations of New Comedy. New Comedy was undoubtedly the source of the motif, and had probably also developed the type of the pandar as he

is sketched by Herodas. The comic element consists in Battaros' discoursing on his shameful calling with all the artistic embellishments at the disposal of a trial lawyer. The whole is an entertaining parody of the trial speech of the grand style. Curiously enough, even at Athens, after the close of the fifth century, trial speeches produced in private cases attained the level of literature. We possess speeches of Lysias and Demosthenes which deal with quite similar nocturnal brawls. It is part of the comic type of the pandar that he admits with complacent shamelessness all the evil traits with which he is charged; he is not at all perturbed by accusations of greed, faithlessness, brutality. Battaros makes neither himself nor his calling out to be one jot better than it is. In amusing contrast to this consummate baseness stand the usual appeals to right and justice, to freedom and the city's reputation:

BATTAROS

Gentlemen of the jury, 'tis not birth
That you are called to judge, nor moral worth.
Though Thales own a ship of value quite
Five talents, while I own — an appetite,
Battaros, in law, is just as good as he,
If at his hands I've suffered injury.

[*Three mutilated lines are here omitted.*]

Men live, you know, not as they wish to do,
But as events outside compel them to.
Mennes supports him; I've Aristophon

As my supporter. Well, the first is known
As a prize-boxer, while my nominee
Is still a good garotter. Come and see
At nightfall, gentlemen, if you should doubt it;
Each bring your cloak, — and each go home without it.
I back *my* champion, and that's all about it.
He'll tell you, " I brought wheat, a plenteous store,
From Ake, and the famine raged no more."
Well, I brought girls from Tyre. How is this, pray,
A public service? He's not given away
The wheat to grind; both of us make you pay.[96]
But if he thinks, because he plies the sea,
And wears a cloak that cost him two or three
Good Attic minas,[97] while I live ashore,
Wrapped in a coarse coat, trailing on the floor
Shoes all in tatters, — if he thinks that therefore
He can take aught of mine that he may care for,
By force, without my leave, at night-time too,
Then the protection guaranteed by you
Means simply nothing, and your boasted joy,
Your independence, Thales will destroy.
He should know who he is, and of what clay
Compounded; he should copy me; I pay
Respect to all alike, both small and great.
Ah! those who are the roof-tree of the State,
Those who may vaunt their birth with better cause
Than can this fellow, *they* regard the laws:
No *citizen* has ever pummelled me,
Or smashed my door in (alien though I be)

[96] Here he points to Myrtale, who is later produced as Exhibit A.
[97] A mina was equivalent to 100 drachmas and worth about $20.

At night-time, or has set my house on fire,
Or wrested from me girls I keep for hire:
But Phrygian Thales, who, I'ld have you know,
Was called Artimmes not so long ago,
Has done all this, and wantonly defied
Laws, councillors, and president beside.
Stay! Read the law, clerk, dealing with the offence
Of personal assault and violence.
(*To the usher*) And you, good sir, bung up the water-clock,
Until he's finished. Thales must not dock
Poor Battaros of his " last suit of clo'es
And what's beneath them," as the saying goes.

CLERK OF THE COURT

" If a free man shall wilfully assault
Or follow a slave woman, for this fault
The fine is double."

BATTAROS

'Twas Chairondes [98] thus
Enacted, mind, not Battaros emulous
To punish Thales. He goes on to say, —
" If a man smash a door in, he shall pay
A mina: if he use his fists in fight,
A mina: if he set the house alight,
Or force his way inside, ten minas," — such
The fines, — " for damage done, just twice as much."
Yes, Thales, *he* inhabited a city;
You don't know what that means, nor — more's the pity —
How city life is ordered. Brikindera

[98] A famous Greek lawgiver, probably of the sixth century.

'S your home to-day, 'twas yesterday Abdera;
To-morrow, if you only get a freight,
You'll take your ship off to Phaselis straight.
Well, lest I bore you with a rambling sort
Of story, gentlemen, I'll cut it short;
Thales has been the pitch, and I the mouse:
I got an awful drubbing, and my house
(I pay " a third " rent, neither less nor more)
Has got charred lintels and a broken door.
Now, Myrtale, my girl, come forward here;
Let them all see you; don't be shy, my dear!
Think that these jurymen whom you behold
Are loving brothers or are fathers old.
See, gentlemen! See how she's bruised all over,
From the rough handling of her scoundrel lover.
Old Age, you ought to get thank-offerings due,
For he'ld have spirted blood, except for you,
Like Brenkian Philip once in Samian land.
Laughing, eh, Thales? I'm a blackguard, and
I don't deny it. Battaros is my name,
My grandsire was Sisymbras, of the same
Profession, as was Sisymbriskos too,
My father; all were pandars. But, for thew
And muscle, I could throttle without fear
A lion, if 'twere Thales. (*To Thales*) Now, look here!
You love the girl perhaps; that's nothing strange.
Well, I love corn. Offer a fair exchange,
— She's yours. Or, if your gizzard is on fire,
Thrust in my hand the price that I require,
— She's yours; maltreat your own just as you please.
He's free to, gentlemen, — for, though in these

Proposals Thales is addressed, yet you
Must carefully decide with judgment true,
As you've no witnesses. But if his real
Desire's the torture, and he seeks ordeal
By slave-examination, then I tender
Myself. Come, rack me, Thales! — only render
My value into court. Why, a decision
By Minos' scales could have no more precision!
And think not, gentlemen, that you are giving
Your votes to Battaros or his way of living,
But unto all the aliens of this State.
Show how that Kos and Merops both are great;
Show what was Herakles' and Thessalos' fame,
Show how Asklepios here from Trikke came,
How Phoebe here gave Leto to the light.
Consider all of this, and guide aright
Your sober judgment; for, if now you smite
The Phrygian, he'll be better by-and-bye,
Unless the ancient proverb tells a lie.

— Hugo Sharpley [99]

A remark or two may be necessary for the proper appreciation of this bold speech. Battaros' position is unfavorable from the start, for he is an alien, and his calling is justly despised. Thales, on the other hand, is wealthy and a grain merchant. Cos could as little subsist without importation of grain as could Athens, and in Attica great care was taken to avoid giving offense to the great grain merchants who

[99] From *A Realist of the Aegean*, by Hugo Sharpley. Reprinted by permission of Mr. Philip Nutt.

controlled the imports. Thales' deadliest weapon is the reference to the cargo of wheat which he had lately imported from Ake in Syria, and Battaros is adroit in his efforts to render this weapon harmless. First, he puts great emphasis on the fact that they are both non-citizens, and therefore on the same plane in the eyes of the law. While he protests his own humble demeanor before the citizens, at the same time he pictures Thales as arrogant and willful and contemptuous of the laws of the city in which he lives. This was a spur to the petty folk among the judges to humble the haughty foreigner. Further, by declaring that Thales was a Phrygian by birth and that his real name was Artimmes, he arouses the racial feeling of the judges, for the Phrygians were among the most despised of barbarian peoples, as is sufficiently indicated by the proverb quoted at the close: "if . . . you smite the Phrygian, he'll be better by-and-bye." He is particularly impudent when he sets his opponent's trade in grain and his own trade in women side by side as equally justifiable professions: each satisfies a primary need, and both require payment for their services. Among the lesser means for heightening the realism of the representation is the stopping of the water clock while the legal document is read. In Athens after the fourth century a fixed time for speaking was allotted to each of the parties in a suit in accordance with the importance of the case, and this time was controlled by a water clock. During the reading of laws, affidavits of witnesses, or records, the water

clock was stopped. In the later Attic orators we frequently find a direction to stop the water clock when an interruption of this character occurs, never given, however, with the obscene jesting which Battaros permits himself. Battaros employs a neat piece of trickery in bringing the abducted harlot before the judges in order to display her injuries. He calculates on the lasciviousness of the judges, for the girl must undress before them, and it is unlikely that they will look upon her with the eyes of a father or brother as our upright Battaros bids them. But this is the only instance where he feigns decorum. Elsewhere he seeks his effects by the astonishing frankness with which he parades his baseness. At the place where the Attic orators were wont to invoke the blamelessness of their lives and the merits of their ancestors, Battaros acknowledges the immorality of his youth and the hereditary character of the disreputable calling in his family. He achieves the climax of shamelessness, according to Greek notions, when he offers to submit himself to torture, for only slaves might be tortured. To his passion for gain, therefore, he would sacrifice his freeman's dignity, which a Greek cherished as his greatest good. He would submit to torture to collect the damages Thales would have to pay in the event of an unfavorable verdict. In the face of this offer, the pompous close in which all the heroes and gods that were the pride of Cos were paraded becomes doubly ludicrous.

More harmless by far is the third *mimiambus, The Schoolmaster.* An angered mother drags her incorrigible offspring to the schoolmaster. She enumerates all the pranks of the young scamp and then has him flogged till the feathers fly. The poem is valuable for the light it throws on certain phases of ancient education.

Of incomparably greater interest is the next poem, *Women Making Offerings and Sacrifice to Asclepius.* This poem gives clear expression to Herodas' aesthetic theory, illustrated by particular reference to plastic art. Two women, Phile and Kynno, bring a sacrifice and a modest votive offering to Asclepius, and they express their admiration for the various works of art exhibited in the sanctuary. I cite several of their observations:

KYNNO

. . . Look how the girl up there
Is gazing at the apple! You would swear
She'll die outright, if she can't get her apple.

PHILE

Then that old man there! That's the way to grapple
With a fox-goose, as that boy does! Yes, by Fate,
The very pose! But that the stone is straight
In front of us, you'ld look for word or moan
From the figures. We shall soon be forced to own
That life itself can dwell in lifeless stone.
Look, Kynno! Myttes' daughter Battale's statue!

Why, there she stands! She might be posing at you!
All ye who know not Battale, survey
This likeness, and you'll know her any day!
— Hugo Sharpley [100]

Later, viewing a painting of Apelles, they express themselves thus:

Phile

. . . If I prick that naked boy,
Surely he'll bleed? The flesh that moulds his form
Lies firm upon his limbs, so warm, so warm,
Throbbing with life, upon the panel thrown:
And if Myellos sees those tongs, you'll own,
Or Pataikiskos, son of Lamprion,
They're like to lose their eyeballs in their greed,
Thinking it silver plate in very deed.
Then, there! The ox, the man in charge, the girl
Who walks beside, the beaked shock-headed churl,
Aren't they just animals? But that I feel
Above such woman's weakness, I could squeal,
For fear the ox should hurt me; the one eye
Shoots out a sidelong glance so threateningly.

Kynno

Yes, dear, Apelles the Ephesian's skill
Fails never, be the subject what you will.
You couldn't say, " Some things that man would see,
And others miss." No, whatsoe'er might be

[100] From *A Realist of the Aegean*, by Hugo Sharpley. Reprinted by permission of Mr. Philip Nutt.

The work — perhaps a god — he planned to do,
With swift, unerring strokes he'ld carry it through.
May he who felt not reverence and awe
Of him and of his works, when such he saw,
Hang in a fuller's workshop by the feet!

— Hugo Sharpley [101]

The enthusiastic approval of the modern painting of Apelles expressed in the last lines must, by reason of its abstraction, have quite exceeded the horizon of simple women. The basic principle of the art criticism is this: life-like representation is the highest achievement in plastic art. The degree of such attainment is the only gauge by which the women appraise all works of art, and one cannot doubt that Herodas would wish to have his own works measured by the same standard. Unqualifiedly faithful reproduction of daily life was the goal for which he strove. As far as content is concerned, he attained it; hence it is remarkable that he so consciously archaized in verse and language.

Realists are wont to show a certain purpose in their representation of the repulsive and the base; Zola, for instance, does so with outspoken pedantry. So the next two *mimiambi* offer very repulsive pictures of the life of metropolitan women. The fifth, *The Jealous Woman*, represents the sadistic cruelty of a rich, elderly woman toward her slave, who

[101] From *A Realist of the Aegean*, by Hugo Sharpley. Reprinted by permission of Mr. Philip Nutt. In reprinting this poem we have changed Mr. Sharpley's arrangement to conform with that of Professor Körte.

is at the same time her lover, but is under suspicion of unfaithfulness. The woman, a veritable Fury, lets him off, finally, at the intercession of her favorite maid. The sixth is even worse; in it two women engage in lively gossip about an implement for lewd purposes which had been made by the cobbler Cerdon. The matter is so infâmous that even scholars at first had no inkling of it. The seventh piece introduces us to the same bootmaker in his own shop, where he is engaged in selling masterpieces of his shoemaker's art at exorbitant prices to excitable and fastidious customers. The last piece, finally, which is entitled *The Dream*, is very interesting because it touches upon the poet himself and his literary quarrels; but unfortunately its reconstruction in several important passages is as yet quite uncertain.

The discovery of Herodas undoubtedly affords us a very welcome increment to our knowledge of Hellenistic poetry, but the value of his keenly observant sketches must not be overestimated. In the first joy of discovery Herodas was termed the only genuine poet of the Hellenistic period. That is certainly going much too far, for he cannot compete with Theocritus in poetic feeling, or with Callimachus in spirit and mastery of form.

A valuable example of another by-product of the mime, the chanted hilarody, was furnished by a lucky papyrus find. According to the report of a learned grammarian a performer of a hilarody appeared in male dress of white color, wearing a golden crown and accompanied by a male or

female lute player. In his performance he refrained from lascivious gestures; his art was more serious and more respectable than that of other musical entertainers and corresponded, in a certain sense, to tragedy. The hilarode differed in all these respects from his brother performer, the magode, who sometimes appeared in female dress, favored lascivious dancing rhythms, was accompanied by a tambourine and cymbals. His performance corresponded to comedy.

The so-called Grenfell Song, which was found written, not in a book roll, but on the reverse side of a contract of the second century B.C., corresponds in every particular to this report about the hilarody, so that we may designate it as such without external attestation. It is not a song, in the usual sense of the word, for it lacks the division into strophes. Sections are discernible, but there is no regular repetition of rhythms; it might be called a great recitative with a different air for each verse. In its freedom of construction it is similar to the chanted arias which Euripides favored in his later plays: the dochmiac measure, which has the preference over the others, is peculiar to tragedy. With the pretentious metrical structure is combined a simple, outspoken, modern language; there are no archaic or dialectic words. The poet adheres to the living tongue of his day, and is in that respect much more natural than Herodas and Theocritus. The subject matter, which is handled in a thoroughly serious vein, is also taken from daily life; again a deserted girl is

the theme. As in Theocritus' *Feast of Adonis,* the setting changes in the course of the poem. The girl is to be thought of as speaking the first lines of the poem in her own home; then we see her hurrying through the streets by night to the house of her lover. Arrived there, in great excitement she requests admission; then follow humble pleading, and, when the door remains closed, threats, then further attempts at reconciliation. This last portion bears quite the character of the *paraclausithyron* (see p. 293), the song which the lover sings outside his mistress' bolted door; the difference is that in this poem the sexes change their rôles. Unfortunately the papyrus is imperfect, and we cannot say how much is lacking or how the scene closes. No translation into English can reproduce either the rhythms or the coloring of the language; I do, however, present a version:

We twain with one will and one heart were united
Beneath the connubial yoke,
And Cypris herself, that fair goddess of loving,
Our sealèd affection bespoke.

Pain seizes me when I remember the way
His kisses burned into my soul, —
He, the author of discord, who left me abandoned,
He, that played such a treacherous rôle!

Yet, despite his desertion, Love held me in thrall, —
Once established, Love will not depart; —
I remember his courting, forget his betrayal,
Nor deny he's still held in my heart.

Dear stars of the heaven, and pale queenly night,
My partner in passion and pain,
Bring me now, willing slave, to his side, whom fair Cypris
And conquering Love lead again.

The fire that burns in my soul is my guide,
It will lead me through torments and woe; —
That deceiver of hearts, who once was so proud,
Denies Cypris my love did bestow!

Ah! the wrong he has done me! Who knows what I suffer,
In mad, frenzied flames am I burned!
Cast down lovers' garlands that bring rosy blushes
To cheeks now so heartlessly spurned!

Yet my Lord, shun me not, do not leave me forever,
Though shut out, I would enter once more;
Thy slave I must be, 'tis my passionate longing,
I am mad for that face I adore!

Truly, Love is the author of terrible griefs!
I'm tortured by jealousy's fires, —
Yet, outwardly silent, pretend to be strong,
And must learn to conceal my desires.

This bitter Truth learn: if thou set thine affection
And passion on one man alone,
Why then thou'rt a fool, because madness possesses
Whoever is faithful to one!

Take warning! My heart becomes steel if once rage
Be born from my spurned lamentations; —
Think'st thou I'm not mad when I seek my lone couch,
While thou runnest to thine assignations?

Ah me! Anger rages, yet peace must return,
For at last every wrong is made right;
Why else have we friends, who will arbitrate strife,
And attempt severed hearts to unite? [102]

There is no artistic rhetoric here; no labored learning disguises the passionate plaint of the forsaken maid who is sacrificing her pride on the altar of irresistible love. Especially delicate and moving is the girl's plea that her faithless lover throw down to her the garlands which deck him at his banquet above. The custom was for the lover to bring to his beloved at night as a pledge of love the garland which he had worn at the banquet. Now she would comfort herself with the garlands, although the coming of their wearer is not to be expected.

When one imagines how the effectiveness of the poem would be heightened by passionate music, an element not present in the Hellenistic poetry we have dealt with heretofore, one can readily understand that hilarody enjoyed great success with its audiences.

5. THE EPIGRAM

Of no other type of Hellenistic poetry do we possess so many charming works from so many hands, of no other can we trace the development so clearly as of the epigram. This

[102] We express our thanks for this translation to a friend who wishes to remain anonymous.

satisfactory situation is due to the circumstance that people began very early, that is to say, in late Hellenistic times, to assemble into collections these poems, which would be so easily forgotten individually. The first tangible collector is Meleager, a Hellenized Syrian from Gadara, himself a prolific epigrammatist, who assembled his *Garland* of epigrams at the beginning of the first century B.C. In the introductory poem, which is extant, he enumerates forty-seven older poets and poetesses, each of whom is compared to some flower or leaf; at the close he expressly states that

> With these be many sprays of other flowers
> Entwined for later singers — but for me
> Early white violets my Muse hath culled.
>
> — J. A. Pott [103]

These "early white violets" are interwoven with a generous hand, for there are about a hundred and thirty epigrams by Meleager himself, three composed for his own tombstone.

A new garland of poets from the period from Sulla to the Emperor Caligula was woven by Philippus of Thessalonica, whose introductory poem is likewise extant. In the centuries that followed new epigrams continued to be equally numerous, though of inferior quality. New collections were, therefore, constantly being formed, of which the most ex-

[103] From *Greek Love Songs and Epigrams*, by J. A. Pott. Reprinted by permission of Messrs. Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner and Co.

tensive, *The Cycle*, or *The Ring*, of Agathias was made as late as the time of the Emperor Justinian (527–565). About the year 900 a Byzantine priest named Constantinus Cephalas, who later attained the dignity of first chaplain of the royal court, produced, out of the great number of collections accessible to him, a new anthology arranged with reference to the subjects of the pieces. To this priest we are indebted for the preservation of a considerable portion of Meleager's *Garland* and of the later collections. It is somewhat surprising to us that he did not find the very worldly and in great measure quite immoral contents of these little poems offensive. Our manuscripts, the most important of which is the famous *Anthologia Palatina*, which is the treasure of the Heidelberg Library, go back to the collection of Cephalas. This Palatine manuscript was sent to the Pope at Rome during the Thirty Years' War. It was then carried off to Paris by Napoleon, but was returned to Heidelberg in an imperfect state, in 1816. It constitutes the only manuscript tradition for a great many of the poems. Of the approximately four thousand epigrams which have been preserved through the medium of Cephalas' collection, the Hellenistic epigrams constitute only a small portion, and these do not all possess poetic worth. Nevertheless, when the chaff is removed there still remains a stately host of poems spirited in tone, perfect in form, and diverse in content.

Lessing rendered "*epigram*" by *Sinngedicht* and defined it as follows: "A *Sinngedicht* is a poem in which our

attention and curiosity, having been aroused for a certain individual object as by a real inscription, are retained in greater or less degree, until satisfied." This definition fits the Hellenistic epigram badly. Lessing's conception of epigram was drawn essentially from the epigrammatists of Roman imperial times, particularly from the Roman poet Martial, whose chief charm lies in the skillful elaboration of an unexpected point. The Hellenistic poets also have many such pointed poems, but many of their best and finest epigrams do not aim at the unexpected point. They do not turn primarily on the intellect, as Lessing's explanation takes for granted, but are rather the favorite form of the Alexandrians for the expression of lyric moods and feelings. In all the forms of Hellenistic poetry which we have considered heretofore there has scarcely been a place for the subjective lyric. Even hilarody, in which the lyric element was very strong, did not permit the poet to give utterance to his own feelings. The epigram was the form in which the Alexandrians expressed their own intimate feelings, particularly on the sorrows and joys of love. That the "inscription" particularly — for the word *epigram* means that and nothing else — should be chosen as the vehicle for subjective erotic poetry is very remarkable and scarcely intelligible without a short survey of the development of epigrammatic poetry.

Originally an epigram was in fact only an inscription. If a Greek of the seventh or the sixth century wished to place

an inscription on the tomb of a kinsman or on a handsome votive offering, he could do so only in poetic form, for there was as yet no artistically formed prose at his disposal. The oldest epigrams, therefore, are composed in hexameters, the meter of epic, or in elegiac distichs, the measure of the Ionian elegy, the form for didactic speech at assemblages of men; iambic trimeter also occurs quite frequently. Homeric expressions constitute the adornment of these early epigrams, which have been preserved on stone in considerable numbers. Gradually personal feeling emerges by the side of the factual statements, and some of the sepulchral inscriptions from the sixth century contain delicate and tender expressions of sorrow. During the stirring period of the Persian Wars the epigram develops an individual style of great effectiveness. In their proud brevity and restrained feeling the sepulchral and votive epigrams from the period of that struggle for liberty are masterly and scarcely excelled by later ages. I call to mind the famous epigram on the grave of the three hundred Spartans who fell at Thermopylae. Richard Heinze has excellently presented the basic thought of this little masterpiece.[104] The passing stranger is requested to deliver a military report at Sparta, which none of the three hundred can do, because they have fallen to the last man. They had received orders to hold Thermopylae under all circumstances, and to the last breath they remained faithful to this order. It is scarcely possible to

[104] *Neue Jahrb. f. d. klass. Altertum*, 1915, p. 6.

render this epigram in a truly satisfactory manner. The following version may perhaps express the essential idea:

> To those of Lacedæmon, stranger, tell,
> That, as their laws commanded, here we fell.
> — JOHN STERLING

The high worth of this and other epigrams on stone was soon realized, and for that reason they soon began to be copied from the stones and assembled into book form. Plato is the first author, to my knowledge, who can be proved to have used such a collection. It can be established that in two instances he read epigrams in a changed form, and not as they appeared on the monuments. For as soon as the epigrams were detached from their stones they became subject to the danger of willful alterations on paper. Very many of the epigrams of the Persian Wars were later expanded on paper,[105] because their dignified brevity seemed inadequate to the later Greeks, whose taste had deteriorated under the influence of rhetoric. A contemporary of Demosthenes cites the famous epigram of the warriors of Thermopylae with an altered ending, and this disfigured version was translated by Cicero into Latin and by Schiller into German. More willfully misleading than the arrangement of the text was the assignment of individual epigrams to certain authors. Poets never name themselves on the older stones; the epigrams were almost all anon-

[105] The tombstone of the Corinthians who fell at Salamis has clearly demonstrated this.

ymous, as was the one on the warriors who fell at Thermopylae. But in the collections the majority gradually acquired the names of famous poets. Because Simonides had in fact composed several epigrams during the period of the struggle for liberty, all good epigrams of the Persian Wars passed current as Simonidean. If an old epigram came from Lesbos, Alcaeus or Sappho must have been the author; if it was from Paros, Archilochus wrote it. These remarks apply to many pieces in Meleager's *Garland* which are ostensibly from the hands of the old lyric poets.

Soon many poems which had never been engraved on stone and which were entirely unsuited for such a purpose found their way into these collections. In the case of Simonides it is easy to see that there have been arbitrarily included among the epigrams short poems in elegiac meter, which is the favorite meter of the epigram. Some are toasts similar in form to sepulchral epigrams, some are fragments of longer elegiac poems, and some are parodies of sepulchral epigrams, such as might be improvised in fun at convivial gatherings. So we possess under the name of Simonides a sepulchral epigram for a contemporary poet of slight significance, Timocreon of Rhodes. The memory of this poet survived chiefly because of his bitter enmity toward Themistocles. The epigram reads:

> After much eating, drinking, lying, slandering,
> Timocreon of Rhodes rests here from wandering.
> — J. H. Merivale

It is clear that these verses never appeared on a tombstone; it is equally clear that this vigorous attack was composed during the lifetime of the foul-mouthed poet.

How easily toasts on living or dead friends and enemies were admitted to collections of epigrams may be clearly seen from the collection of Platonic epigrams which had been assembled in pre-Alexandrian times and was used by Meleager for his *Garland*. The greater part of the more than thirty epigrams is certainly not Platonic, but some are irreproachable. We read, for example, deeply sincere verses on the tragic death of Dio of Syracuse, beloved friend of Plato:

Weeping the lot of the Ilian women — for Hecuba weeping —
This was the weft of the Fates spun on the day they were born.
Ah! but from thee, my Dion, thy sacrifice gratefully keeping,
Wide was the hope that the gods, quenching thine honours, have torn.
Thou, while thy citizens praise thee, in the glades of thy land liest sleeping,
Dion, desire of whose love wilders my senses forlorn.

— William M. Hardinge

On this poem an author remarks: "From the tomb in Syracuse." This is manifestly wrong; it is impossible that Plato's personal acknowledgment of his affection should be engraven on the tombstone. It shows, however, that a certain

similarity to the sepulchral epigrams was sensed in these verses. Still more remote from the epigrams on stone stands another poem which Plato might have delivered at a banquet in the Academy:

> Tho' now of our Alexis nothing 's seen,
> Say, Stone? how beautiful his life has been,
> By ev'ry one around admir'd and known.
> Why dost thou point, O Soul! to dogs a bone?
> Sorrow for this thou afterwards shalt know —
> Did we not lose our Phædrus even so?
>
> — R. G. MacGregor

We can see, therefore, that the Hellenistic poets found not a few poems in the older collections which could never have been cut on stone. It was particularly through the intrusion of convivial poetry among the poems taken from monuments that the conception of the epigram became more inclusive, and it came about naturally that convivial poetry gradually took an ever increasing part in epigrammatic poetry.

Two movements are discernible in the composition of Hellenistic epigrams, the one Peloponnesian-Doric, the other Ionic-Alexandrian. I begin with the latter because it is incomparably richer and more attractive. Its first and perhaps most gifted representative is Asclepiades of Samos. He is the poet mentioned in Theocritus' *The Harvest-Home* beside Philetas of Cos as a master of the poetic art. Since Theocritus says that he does not dare to compete with Asclepiades

(see p. 297), the latter must have been an older contemporary of Theocritus. Consistent with this chronology is the fact that his contemporary Poseidippus, who is often mentioned in connection with him, was honored by the Aetolians in the year 280; there he is expressly designated as an epigrammatist. From the strong influence Asclepiades exercised upon the Alexandrian poets we may suppose that he came to Alexandria, too, but it cannot be certainly proven. He did not compose epigrams exclusively, for there was named after him the Asclepiadic verse, the lyric measure with which Horace opens the first book of his *Odes*. Besides about forty epigrams, we have extant a single scazon.

It is indeed very probable that Asclepiades, like Callimachus, composed to order actual inscriptions for graves and votive offerings, but among the extant poems there is none for which original inscription on stone is to be assumed. The impression of an actual sepulchral inscription is given by the following poem:

> Thou who dost stride my empty barrow by,
> When thou art come to Chios, traveler, tell
> My father, Melesagoras, that I
> Of merchandise, of ship, of life as well
> By evil Eurus have been quite bereft.
> Naught of Euippos save the name is left.
>
> — W. C. Lawton [106]

[106] From *The Soul of the Anthology*, by W. C. Lawton. Reprinted by permission of Yale University Press.

When one considers, however, that only the closest of kin could erect a cenotaph (empty grave) for poor Euippus, who sank with his boat, it becomes very remarkable that the deceased should call to the traveler from his empty grave to report the sad news to his parents. This peculiar motif found favor and was treated with variations by other epigrammatists. The most successful was Callimachus, who varies and extends the motif of Asclepiades. In Callimachus' poem it is not the dead man, whom the cenotaph does not cover, that speaks, but the grave itself:

> If thou to Cyzicus should'st go, 'twill be
> No toil to find out Hippacus and Didymé.
> The family's well known. Though sad be told
> The tale, say — dead their Critias here I hold.
>
> — G. Burges

Callimachus omitted the apostrophe to the traveler as being self-evident, and the beginning of the request is purposely made to resemble harmless conversation, so that the message of sorrow becomes the more gripping.

The fiction is quite transparent when in another epigram Asclepiades introduces Valor as speaking. Valor mourns at the grave of Ajax because the unrighteous judgment of the Greeks over the arms of Achilles had driven the hero to his death:

> I, Valour, wretched maid, sit here forlorn
> By Ajax' tomb, my locks for sorrow shorn:
> Grieved at my heart, among the Greeks to see
> Crafty and base Deceit preferred to me.
>
> — Lord Neaves

The improvisation of sepulchral epigrams for the heroes of epic was a favorite pastime at banquets. A Homeric scholiast reports an amusing product of this intellectual game. A banqueter would name a favorite Greek hero and make an epigram on him, and the next would have to do the same with a Trojan whose name began with the same letter. To Poseidippus, the comrade of Asclepiades, once fell the task of making an epigram on a Trojan whose name began with a *B*. Not being able to think of one offhand [107] Poseidippus made an epigram on Berisus. There was no Trojan of that name, but Poseidippus created one by misinterpreting a line of Homer, " He went to slay Isus." Poseidippus later suppressed this epigram on Berisus, but it was read by the great Homeric critic Aristarchus as part of a collection called the *Soros* or *Heap* which Poseidippus in his youth issued with Asclepiades and Hedylus.[108] I cite this story because it shows that even sepulchral epigrams might belong to the class of convivial poetry.

Closely allied to the fictitious epigrams for the tombs of heroes are those on poets and poetesses of old, which, in turn, are related to those on poetic works. So we have in the *Anthology* an epigram of Asclepiades on Erinna, a poetess of the fourth century, who was highly esteemed by the Hellenists. It is found among the sepulchral epigrams,

[107] See *Iliad* XI. 101. He might have chosen Bienor (*Iliad* XI. 92).

[108] The existence of the *Soros* as the joint work of the three friends rests on a plausible though not certain conjecture of Reitzenstein.

though it is more suitable for an edition of Erinna than for her grave:

> This small, sweet book is mightier far
> Than all our learned poets are.
> Alas that death so swiftly came
> To quench Erinna's maiden famè.
> For nineteen summers scarce had flown
> Ere Pluto seized her for his own.
> — F. A. WRIGHT [109]

The epigram cited above (p. 95) on Antimachus' *Lyde*, which Asclepiades (unlike Callimachus) esteemed very highly, also gives the effect of a motto for an edition.

Though the poems of Asclepiades cited up to this point may be construed as inscriptions in a wider sense, the majority of his epigrams are without any connection with inscriptions. They are the lineal descendants of the old convivial poetry — the Ionic elegy, the Anacreontic song, and the Attic *scolia*. Their concern is principally with wine and love.

Praise of love often appears as an admission of a way of life rather than as an exposition of personal experiences. This is true of the pert quatrain:

> Sweet in summer is snow to him that's athirst, and sweet
> To sailors when winter is done the Crown of the spring to greet.

[109] From *The Poets of The Greek Anthology*, by F. A. Wright. Reprinted by permission of Messrs. George Routledge and Sons, Ltd.

But this is sweeter than all, and a joy all joys above
For lovers, alone together, to sing the praises of love.

— J. A. Pott [110]

In another poem addressed to Zeus this passion for enjoyment of life and of love assumes the proportions of a defiant ardor:

Cast snow and hail, fold me in darkness' shroud,
Let lightnings blaze, and thunderbolts be hurled,
Unloose the might of every lurid cloud,
Till murky gloom encompass all the world.

For if thou slay me, 'tis the end of all,
Yet if thou leave me life, in spite of ill,
Yea, though a fate more dread than these befall
Love's revel will I keep, undaunted still.

A god doth drive me: in the days of old,
Lord of the world, he mastered even thee;
'Tis love who taught thee, in a shower of gold,
To pierce the brazen towers of Danaë.

— J. A. Pott [110]

The stormy pitch of the first verses is dissolved into the good-natured jest of the last four lines. Zeus too had often enough experienced the irresistible might of Eros, as, for example, when he appeared in the guise of a golden shower to Danae imprisoned in her brazen chamber. It was through

[110] From *Greek Love Songs and Epigrams*, by J. A. Pott. Reprinted by permission of Messrs. Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner and Co.

Asclepiades and his contemporaries that the figure of Eros, a gentle and playful child who was yet mightier than the gods of Olympus, acquired the popularity in poetry and plastic art which we mentioned in our discussion of the *Argonautica* (see p. 204). But they were not content with a single Eros; poetry and art created hosts of these dangerous winged boys. The impulse to multiply divinities in order to give stronger emphasis to their power is found in Greek religion from time immemorial. Athena herself had to suffer being doubled in an ancient Attic relief. Cybele, the great mother of the gods from Phrygia, is quite often so represented. When, towards the end of the fifth century, the Athenians surrounded with a protecting balustrade the lofty bastion on the Acropolis which bears the little Temple of Athena-Nike, they were not satisfied with a single goddess of victory; a gay crowd of charming winged maidens riots on the splendid reliefs of the balustrade. The multiplicity of Erotes which greets us, for example, in the following epigram of Asclepiades, is to be understood as we understand the multiplicity of Victories on the balustrade at the Acropolis:

Not two and twenty, yet I tire
  Of Life and all its woe.
Ye Loves why set my heart afire,
  Why will ye vex me so?
For if I die your sport is o'er,
  Yet doubtless ye would play

At dice for hearts as heretofore,
Heedless of those ye slay.

— J. A. Pott [111]

We have here in addition, between the beginning and the close of this poem, strong emotional tension. The first verse recalls Goethe's splendid *Ach ich bin des Treibens müde.* The twenty-two year old youth is oppressed by a feeling of surfeit. He feels that, despite his youth, he is a master of the love song to whom the Cupids must feel beholden, but lest this should sound presumptuous he at once erases any such impression by the charming picture of the Cupids not permitting his death to interrupt their play.

But the poet does not always treat of generalities in this fashion. Sometimes he presents specific scenes out of his own and his comrades' love-life. Thus we see his friend, distraught with unhappy love, sitting at the banquet:

Wine proves the lover, though he try
The power of passion to deny,
You told us that you ne'er had loved
But soon your cups the falsehood proved.
Your head sunk down, your eyes grew red,
The garland stayed not on your head,
And on your face a look of shame
Confessed the might of Venus name.

— F. A. Wright [112]

[111] From *Greek Love Songs and Epigrams*, by J. A. Pott. Reprinted by permission of Messrs. Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner and Co.

[112] From *The Poets of The Greek Anthology*, by F. A. Wright. Reprinted by permission of Messrs. George Routledge and Sons, Ltd.

Callimachus varied this poem also, and excelled it:

Our friend was wounded, and we never knew!
Yet marked you not the laboured breath he drew?
And as he quaffed his cup — 'twas but the third —
I saw the petals of his roses stirred
And scattered on the ground, a certain sign
Of Eros' flame; no random guess is mine.
Full well I see the way that love has run;
A thief myself, I know the tracks of one.

— J. A. Pott [113]

Here the scene is made more lifelike by the fact that one boon companion relates his observations to the other and calls him to witness for their truth. It is a fine poetic gradation that the unhappy love is revealed by the rose petals dropping from the garland instead of by the garland's setting awry, and the transition to the first person through a pointed proverb heightens the effect of the epigram. Callimachus does not always succeed, as he does here, in enhancing a motif of Asclepiades without sacrificing its delightful simplicity.

The love of which the Alexandrians sing pertains only to sensual enjoyment. The girls are, at best, like Theocritus' Simaetha; for the most part they are simply courtesans, who trade on their charms. With them there can be no thought of faithfulness, and indeed it is not expected of

[113] From *Greek Love Songs and Epigrams*, by J. A. Pott. Reprinted by permission of Messrs. Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner and Co.

them, as is shown by the following graceful poem of Asclepiades:

Sporting with sweet Hermione
I noted that she wore
A broidered girdle, fair to see,
As ere the Paphian bore.
And round in golden letters ran —
'Love me, and aye be true;
But grudge not if another man
Should love as well as you!'

— J. A. Pott [114]

Affection for beloved lads who had the same social status as the poets was usually deeper than for girls. Hardly another poem of Asclepiades breathes so strong a sentiment as does this poem on handsome Amyntas:

Hang here, my wreath, below the eaves;
Delay to shake and drop your leaves
Drenched with my tears — a lover's eye
Is showerfull — till you espy
The opening door; then rain, that so
Those golden locks may drink my woe.

— Walter Leaf [115]

The poem is, as it were, a sequel to a *paraclausithyron*. The poet went bedecked with garlands from the banquet to the house of his beloved Amyntas, but the door remained

[114] From *Greek Love Songs and Epigrams*, by J. A. Pott. Reprinted by permission of Messrs. Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner and Co.

[115] From *Little Poems from the Greek*, by Walter Leaf. Reprinted by permission of The Richards Press, Ltd.

shut. He may have serenaded or wailed, as is required by the *paraclausithyron*, but that is done with. He turns to go and leaves his tear-stained garlands behind him on the door as proof of his sorrow of love.

Here is a complete miniature dramatic scene compressed into the narrow compass of an epigram. Asclepiades often carries the process further; the following poem might almost be called a mime in epigram form:

Run quick, Demetrius, at Amyntas' stall
Three herrings get, and ten (but very small)
Smelts, and fresh prawns two dozen (you're a dunce;
He'll count them for you). Then come back at once;
But coming back stop at the florist's, buy
Six rosy wreaths the best they can supply,
And don't forget (her door is by your way)
T' engage us Tryphera to come and play.

— W. R. Paton [116]

Every stroke in this poem is delicate and lively. First comes the enumeration of the various delicacies for the eve-

[116] From *Anthologiae Graecae Erotica*, by W. R. Paton. Reprinted by permission of Mr. Philip Nutt. We quote also the translation of Mr. F. A. Wright, which we reprint from *The Girdle of Aphrodite*, by permission of Messrs. George Routledge and Sons, Ltd.:

Now, Pat, be off and don't be late.
Three herrings buy at Billingsgate
And then some sprats — say, half a score —
And prawns — he'll count them — twenty-four.
The florist's shop is on your way
So don't forget a big bouquet.
And while you're there you might invite
My darling Belle to come to-night.

ning meal, at which, as is usual among later Greeks, fish constitutes the *pièce de résistance*. The boy is to get three of the larger and ten of the smaller.[117] The garlands indicate that the dinner is to be followed by a drinking bout. But the number of guests cannot be determined with certainty from the number of garlands, for the ancient toper often wore several. The particular charm of the poem, however, lies in the fact that, after describing the preparations completely, the poet mentions the invitation to his love, which is really his chief desire, only briefly and in passing, as if he were afraid of displaying his affection.

I will add only a neat banqueting improvisation to a handsome lad, and shall thereby have touched on all the various forms of the epigram which Asclepiades cultivated:

If thine were wings, and in thy hand were bow and arrows now,
Eros had never painted been as Cypria's child, but thou.
— R. G. MacGregor

His art, does not, to be sure, penetrate into the uttermost depths of the soul, but he does express with delightful truth

[117] In his version Professor Körte translates by "shrimps with arched tail." He asks us to note that the qualification "with arched tail" is very important, for the shrimp doubles over when cooked only if it is thrown into the water alive, and no southerner would touch shrimps that are not doubled over. It may also be remarked that shrimps in the southern Mediterranean attain ten times the size of Baltic shrimps, so that twenty-four would make quite a dish.

and simplicity the various moods of a highly cultivated and pleasure-loving society. The greatest charm of these dainty miniatures, the perfection of form and language, no translation can reproduce.

Poseidippus has been mentioned several times along with his comrade Asclepiades. We have somewhat more information about his life, through the fortunate discovery of an inscription. He was a native of Pella, the Macedonian metropolis, and had achieved so distinguished a reputation by the year 280 that the Aetolians publicly honored him, apparently because he had composed epigrams for their votive offerings. He appears to have been in Athens as a young man and to have occupied himself for a time with Stoic philosophy, for a poem which was composed at a later date, in which he renounces the philosophy of Zeno and Cleanthes, presupposes personal contact with the two heads of the Stoic school:

With Bacchus' shower soak us all,
O Attic demijohn.
Let thy thick rain impartial fall
Our merry club upon.

Zeno, the dying swan, is dead;
Cleanthes cannot sing;
Love reigneth till we go to bed,
Our sweet and bitter king.

— W. R. Paton [118]

[118] From *Anthologiae Graecae Erotica*, by W. R. Paton. Reprinted by permission of Mr. Philip Nutt.

In the decade 280–270 we find him in Alexandria, where he celebrates in spirited epigrams the marvellous new lighthouse on the island of Pharus and the temple of Aphrodite-Arsinoë erected on the promontory of Zephyrion. His close relationship with Asclepiades must fall in this period at latest; probably it came much earlier. Even Meleager could often no longer decide whether an epigram was by Asclepiades or by Poseidippus. This fact and the circumstance that Poseidippus very frequently depends on Asclepiades, once even so largely that a poem appears to be simply a continuation of one by Asclepiades, makes the assumption probable that the two friends, together with the less important Hedylus, issued a book of epigrams. This would be the reason that Meleager in the introductory poem to his *Garland* groups these three together as the *Wild Blossoms from the Corn.*

Sometimes we can clearly perceive how the one comrade catches the ball thrown by the other and then passes it on. If Asclepiades describes a certain handsome youth as a faithful likeness of Eros, were he only equipped with wings and a bow (see p. 369), Poseidippus repeats the same motif and heightens it:

> If golden wings of angel shine,
> A dowry from above, were thine,
> If, from thy snowy shoulders flung,
> Were arrow'd quiver rattling hung,
> And thou wert standing, O most dear!

To her own brilliant Eros near,
Cypris, by Hermes! would not see
Which were her offspring, thou or He.
— R. G. MacGregor

The appearance side by side of the true Eros and the lad who is his peer, and above all, the doubt on the part of Cypris herself as to which is the genuine Eros, sharpens the point of Asclepiades' clever thought considerably, without falling into bad taste. But when Meleager, on the other hand, follows the two in his *Garland* with a poem of his own manufacture, in which he treats the same theme from the negative aspect, and declares that if Eros had no wings, bow and arrows, he might be taken for Zoilus — when this conceit is reached, then dull captiousness takes the place of graceful jesting.

Yet, where Poseidippus follows Asclepiades' footprints, he is less delicate and graceful. Asclepiades has a pleasant jest in the Hermione epigram on the habitual faithlessness of courtesans; Poseidippus treats the same idea with brutal directness:

Trust not to tears, Philaenis, nay,
Nor think that you deceive me.
You love me best of all, you say?
I know it well, believe me.

Whilst I am here your vows are true;
No love could be sincerer,

Until another come to you,
Then he will be the dearer.

— J. A. Pott [119]

The same trait appears in a poem carefully relating the preparations for a drinking bout for a small company, which Poseidippus composed as a companion piece to the poem of Asclepiades which describes with similar care the preparation for a banquet (see p. 368):

We're four, and each his lady; that makes eight.
One demi-john will not last very late.
Run ask Aristion if she can spare
Her first — there still must be two gallons there
For certain, more perhaps; but look alive,
She'll finish else before we start — at five.

— W. R. Paton [120]

Of course it is a jolly thought that the host attempts to extort a generous extra measure of wine from the wine mer-

[119] From *Greek Love Songs and Epigrams*, by J. A. Pott. Reprinted by permission of Messrs. Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner and Co.

[120] From *Anthologiae Graecae Erotica*, by W. R. Paton. Reprinted by permission of Mr. Philip Nutt. We also quote Mr. Wright's translation, which we reprint from *The Girdle of Aphrodite*, by permission of Messrs. George Routledge and Sons, Ltd.:

There's Jack and Nancy, Bob and Sue,
Dick with his Molly, Tom and Prue,
This cask, my lad, they'll drink it dry;
To get some more we'd better try.
Go to the vintner; say I'm sure
It was two gallons short or more.
But hurry quick, and come back soon
For they'll be here before it's noon.

chant on the claim that the original measure was not full, because he foresees that the amount he has ordered will not suffice. But the tone of the poem is entirely materialistic; the hidden amorousness which made Asclepiades' epigram so charming is wanting.

I shall cite another scene from courtesan life, a theme which occupies many of the epigrams of Poseidippus that are inferior to those of Asclepiades:

> Bold Love has led me here;
> So let me in, I pray,
> If my love sleeps alone:
> If not I'll go away.
> And give this token of my passion true
> 'Reeling with wine, through thieves I came to you.'
>
> — F. A. WRIGHT [121]

This poem has become slightly corrupted in transmission. I understand the situation as follows. The poet is negotiating not with the unnamed courtesan but with her maidservant [Pythias] whom he asks for admission. She is to put a good word in for him with her mistress — provided the mistress is not entertaining another lover.

Poseidippus showed great originality and charm in depicting a love scene and celebrating at the same time a poetess long dead. This comparatively long poem is hardly intelligible without a few preliminary remarks. The poetess Sappho had a brother Charaxus, whom she dearly loved.

[121] From *The Girdle of Aphrodite*, by F. A. Wright. Reprinted by permission of Messrs. George Routledge and Sons, Ltd.

Charaxus was a wine merchant and imported good Lesbian wine to Naucratis, where he fell into the snare of Doricha, a beautiful courtesan, upon whom he lavished great sums of money. Sappho was very indignant about this liaison and reproached her brother sharply, the more particularly since he had capitulated to Doricha a second time. We now possess two poems of Sappho on papyrus, unfortunately not well preserved, which are related to this incident. Poseidippus takes as his starting point the charms of Doricha and her love affair with Charaxus; then he proceeds to praise the imperishable art of Sappho, which had made even Doricha immortal:

Your beauty long ago is dust, and dust your lovely hair,
Your ribbons and the scented robe that once you loved to wear,
You flung it round Charaxus, and held him to your heart,
That night you spent in rapture, till morning bade you part.
But still in Sappho's flawless ode is your beloved name,
And lives for ever in a song oblivion cannot claim;
So men must love you, Doricha, while Naucratis shall be,
Or ships shall stir the long lagoons where Nilus meets the sea.

— J. A. Pott [122]

One species of epigrams not to be attested with certainty among the extant remains of Asclepiades is concerned with

[122] From *Greek Love Songs and Epigrams*, by J. A. Pott. Reprinted by permission of Messrs. Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner and Co.

the glorification of celebrated works of art. I cite as an example of this species the following poem of Poseidippus on a statue of Alexander by Lysippus, although it is one of Poseidippus' less successful efforts, and even clumsy in its opening:

Sculptor of Sicyon! Artist rare! Lysippus of bold hand!
Thrilling with life, instinct with fire, what genius and command
Flashes in Alexander's form: this matchless form to see,
The rout of Persia was no shame: herds will the lion flee.
— R. G. MacGregor

On the whole, Poseidippus is poorer than Asclepiades in inventiveness, coarser in tone, and not so concise or apt in expression. But his robust vigor renders him attractive, and he towers head and shoulders above the imitators who were nourished for centuries on the legacy of this generation of poets.

The third of the poets whom Meleager grouped with Asclepiades and Poseidippus as *Wild Blossoms from the Corn* stands a step lower. He was Hedylus. His mother, Hedyle, had been a poetess. He too certainly sojourned in Alexandria, for in a fairly long poem he celebrates an automaton in the temple of Aphrodite-Arsinoë. Wine plays a rôle of considerably greater importance with him than with his comrades. Scarcely any Greek poet since Alcaeus had praised wine with such fervor as his:

Crown high the cup and pass it round,
For subtle thought and rare
Or miracle of honeyed sound
Perchance is lurking there.

Full draughts of Chian let me taste,
If ye would stir my wit,
For life is but an arid waste
Except we moisten it.

— J. A. Pott [123]

It was no stupid tippling that this profligate but clever young society practised. The wine only caused the flame of their wit to flare higher and helped in the creation of an abundance of graceful epigrams. As is likely to happen in such cases, many of the cleverest ideas conceived in gay drinking mood were never committed to writing and were quickly forgotten. So Hedylus praises a certain Socles, a comrade particularly devoted to drink, unknown in the history of literature:

From morn to night, from night to morn again,
With flagons that four choës each contain,
Drinks Pasisocles,[124] then, come what come may,
Suddenly rising, takes himself away.
But at a feast where good wine circles free,

[123] From *Greek Love Songs and Epigrams*, by J. A. Pott. Reprinted by permission of Messrs. Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner and Co.

[124] Probably because of a misreading of the text, Major MacGregor gives the name as Pasisocles instead of Socles.

More sweetly than Sicelides plays he
And far more vigorous. A grace how great
Beams o'er him. Write, and drink, Friend! ere too late.
— R. G. MacGregor

As was mentioned above (p. 297), Sicelidas is a nickname for Asclepiades. The praise which Hedylus bestows on Socles is therefore very high indeed, and it is to be deplored that his vigorous talent fell a victim, probably prematurely, to his fondness for wine.

A peculiar specialty of Hedylus are his poems ridiculing gluttons, male and female; because of their punning, often frigid, these coarse poems are not suitable for translation into English. The same personages whom Asclepiades names, friends and girls, recur frequently in Hedylus.

Next to Asclepiades, Callimachus is by far the most important master of the Alexandrian epigram. He is not quite as simple as Asclepiades in language and thought, but is his equal in vigor and perfection of form, and superior in the art of saying much in a few words. We have seen in two examples (pp. 360 and 366) how he was able to enhance Asclepiadean motifs. We also have had several occasions to quote some of his shorter poems, in explanation of his private life (p. 99), his poetic principles (p. 108), or as giving his opinions on ancient and contemporary poets (pp. 152, 247).

Of the sixty-three epigrams which we have from his hand the majority, it is certain, belong to his youth, when he

was teaching boys in Eleusis. But as an old man he occasionally harked back to the epigram with undiminished skill, as in the graceful homage to his young compatriot, Queen Berenice, in celebration of whom the last of his great elegies was also written:

Four are the Graces: three we know
And Berenicë here below.
See how she holds their linkéd hands,
And wet with perfume by them stands.
Without her now who shines afar
Not e'en the Graces graces are.

— F. A. Wright [125]

Callimachus shows a somewhat richer variety of form than Asclepiades and his companions. In addition to the customary elegiac distich, he employs other measures in four epigrams, one of which I quote:

Menoetas' quiver, with his bow,
Serapis, at thy feet doth lie.
No shafts are here — the stricken foe
Of Hesperis shall tell thee why.[126]

— J. A. Pott [127]

This little poem, which also belongs to the poet's later years, under the reign of Ptolemy Euergetes, is in no wise as

[125] From *The Girdle of Aphrodite*, by W. F. Wright. Reprinted by permission of Messrs. George Routledge and Sons, Ltd.

[126] The original is in lightly skipping Anacreontics.

[127] From *Greek Love Songs and Epigrams*, by J. A. Pott. Reprinted by permission of Messrs. Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner and Co.

artless as it appears at first blush. Much history is involved in it. The Cretan archer Menoetas served in the king's army, and with him subdued the insubordinate inhabitants of Euhesperides in the territory of Cyrene. Now the war is over; Menoetas gives up his military service and dedicates his weapons, which had become useless to him, to Serapis, the great god of Alexandria. In the candid address to the god the bow is slightingly referred to by the name of its material, horn;[128] we see that its possessor no longer values it highly. He can give up his bow and quiver, but not his arrows, for with them he has unerringly smitten the inhabitants of Euhesperides, and thereby faithfully discharged his warrior's duty. All this is told without a trace of boasting. We can hardly believe, yet can scarcely deny with certainty, that the famous old poet could at that time really be induced to compose a dedicatory epigram for a simple soldier.

But that in his youth Callimachus composed dedicatory and sepulchral epigrams to order seems to me indisputable. In contrast to Asclepiades, the number of his poems which give the impression of being real inscriptions is quite large. In fact many of those extant give only the necessary names

[128] Since the word does not occur in the metrical version, we quote the prose translation of Mr. W. R. Paton, which we reprint from The Loeb Classical Library, by permission: "Menoetas of Lyctus dedicated his bow with these words: 'Here, Serapis, I give thee the horn bow and quiver, but the men of Hesperis have the arrows.'"

and the statement of the dedication or burial. The charm of these little poems lies only in their conciseness of expression and the skillful arrangement of names. It is a charm which can hardly be rendered by translation; I venture, however, a few citations. First, I give the dedicatory inscription of a statue of a young maiden in the temple of Isis:

> Fair Æschylis, from Thales sprung,
> In Isis' fane an offering hung;
> And thus the vow her mother made,
> Irene's vow, is fully paid.
>
> — H. W. Tytler

The only information given here beside the bare statement of the facts is that the mother and not the father vowed the statue.

Next comes a sepulchral inscription:

> Who pass this tomb of Elean Cymon, know
> The son of old Hippæus sleeps below.
>
> — R. G. MacGregor

The second verse serves only to emphasize the father's name.

To be sure, Callimachus often understands how to sound a short but sharp note of sentiment even in the briefest form:

> His son, now twelve years old, Philippus sees
> Here laid, his mighty hope, Nicoteles.
>
> — Lord Neaves

By being placed at the close of the verses the two names are emphasized, and thereby a contrast is drawn between the tender youth of the deceased and the high hopes his father lost in him, a motif which is ever suitable for graves of children at all times and in all places.

And now I give the pearl of all the poet's sepulchral epigrams:

> Here Dicon's son, Acanthian Saon lies
> In sacred sleep: say not a good man *dies.*
>
> — Lord Neaves

I know that the second verse with its unexcelled simplicity of spirit has seemed to German fathers in our own day the best expression of mourning for a hopeful son.

Even when the poems become somewhat longer and more pretentious in content and expression, they may yet have been composed for the practical end of being inscribed. Note the pretty dedication of a brazen gamecock for a sporting victory, probably in cockfighting. The fowl itself speaks, with waggish candor:

> I am a bronzen game-cock — thus
> My donor says, Euaenetus;
> For of myself I know not aught —
> Unto the Great Twin brethren wrought,
> In gratitude for victory won;
> I take the word of Phaedrus' son.
>
> — Walter Leaf [129]

[129] From *Little Poems from the Greek*, by Walter Leaf. Reprinted by permission of The Richards Press, Ltd.

How the confidence of the cock in the veracity of his donor Euaenetus makes it possible for the father and the grandfather of the dedicant to be mentioned is as unexpected as it is clever.

One of Callimachus' epigrams on cenotaphs of victims of the sea may also have been a real inscription:

Would there had never been a ship to run
The hazard of the deep:
We had not wept for Diocleides' son
As vainly now we weep.
Dead in the dreary waste, dear Sopolis,
You drift upon the wave,
And nought is left us but your name, and this
Only an empty grave.

— J. A. Pott [130]

In the case of the epigram for the cenotaph of the Cyzican Critias we have already seen (p. 360) that it was only an elaboration of an Asclepiadean poem and that in reality its presuppositions were impossible. Callimachus, therefore, used the form of the sepulchral inscription for clever pastime just as Asclepiades had done. Sometimes an epigram has the effect of an interpretation, occasioned by the poet's mood, of an actual epitaph.

Timonoe! Who art thou? By Heav'n! I should not thee have known,

[130] From *Greek Love Songs and Epigrams*, by J. A. Pott. Reprinted by permission of Messrs. Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner and Co.

But for thy sire Timotheus' name carv'd on thy fun'ral stone,
Methymna's too, thy natal town. Well wot I, losing thee,
Great of thy lord Euthymenes the pain and grief must be!
— R. G. MacGregor

Apparently the poet approached the grave and at first read only "Timonoe." The name alone told him nothing, but he reads also the name of the father and the home, and he realizes that he has known the deceased and her husband. The poet's positive assertion that the surviving husband will be affected with great sorrow is a tribute to the dead.

A form of sepulchral inscription which in later times was repeated with variations *ad nauseam* and was often actually carved on stone was the dialogue between a passer-by and the grave or the dead. Callimachus has an example of this form:

A
Rests Charidas beneath this tomb?
B
Here I,
Son of Arimnas of Cyrene, lie.
A
Charidas! what's below?
B
Eternal night.
A
What your returns to earth?
B
A falsehood quite.

A

And Pluto?

B

But a fable: all as one,
Body and soul are ended and undone.
Soft words you'd have of me, I speak the true,
An ox in Hades fares as well as you.

— R. G. MacGregor

The poet first addresses the grave, which then replies, after the manner of a doorkeeper. Then the dead himself enters into the conversation. His replies to the curious questioning of the living regarding conditions in the hereafter are delightful. At first his utterances are brief and bitter, but when the stranger expresses shocked surprise at the complete evanescence of the amiable and hopeful pictures of the world below he is moved to a long and very incisive response. Myths, philosophical speculations and popular imaginings are amusingly intermingled in the few verses. Callimachus also had Hipponax say in his collection of *iambi* (p. 105) that he comes from the place where they sell an ox for a penny. We have already become acquainted with Callimachus' epigrams on poets ancient (p. 152) and modern (p. 247); we have also had an example of poetry of wine and women (p. 366).

Callimachus' love epigrams, like those of Asclepiades, deal with either his own or others' love affairs. The following, for example, deals with a comrade:

To Fair Ionis Callignotus said:
'None will I love but thee, nor man nor maid.'
So did he vow; but lovers' oaths, men say,
Reach not the ears of gods, they go astray.
Now for a youth he burns; and she, forlorn,
Is like poor Megara a thing of scorn.

— F. A. Wright [131]

The last verse contains an allusion to a well-known oracle. The Megarians had complacently inquired of the Delphian god what rank they held among the Greeks. But they came off badly, for Apollo enumerated various states and peoples who took first place respectively in various domains and then closed:

But as for you, men of Megara, not third, not fourth, nor yet twelfth
Can ye be reckoned, nor come ye at all into possible counting.

In Callimachus' own amatory experiences handsome lads played a larger rôle than did girls. Probably his best love-poem, a companion piece to the Amyntas epigram of Asclepiades, treats of his love for Archinus with a tenderness and warmth that is not surpassed by the work of any other epigrammatist:

If I did come of set intent
Then be thy blame my punishment;
But if by love a capture made

[131] From *The Girdle of Aphrodite*, by F. A. Wright. Reprinted by permission of Messrs. George Routledge and Sons. Ltd.

Forgive my hasty serenade.
Wine drew me on, Love thrust behind,
I was not master of my mind.
And when I came I did not cry
My name aloud, my ancestry;
Only my lips thy lintel pressed;
If this be crime, the crime's confessed.
— F. A. WRIGHT [132]

In love as in poetry Callimachus contemns anything trivial, or light of attainment; he is attracted only by the unusual and the difficult. To this feeling he gives open and impressive utterance:

The hunter, Epicydes, will not spare
To follow on the trace of fawn and hare
Through snow and frost, so long as still they fly;
But if one say " 'Tis hit," he passes by.
Even so my love, winged for no willing prize,
Follows what flees, and flees what fallen lies.
— RICHARD GARNETT

Of his own love for a girl he speaks in only one poem, which is a skillful compression of a *paraclausithyron* into the narrow frame of an epigram:

O Cruel, cruel! As I lie
Upon this ice-cold stone,
So may you sleep whose lovers sigh
In misery alone —

[132] From *The Poets of The Greek Anthology*, by F. A. Wright. Reprinted by permission of Messrs. George Routledge and Sons, Ltd.

The very neighbours grieve to see
How here I lie in agony.

So may you sleep! Within your heart
No shade of pity lives;
Your pride in mercy has no part,
To love no kindness gives.
Soon will the grey hairs come — and they
Perchance will make you rue this day.
— F. A. WRIGHT [133]

The repetition of the identical expressions was intended to echo the artless manner of the serenade before the door of the beloved, which comprised only few motifs often repeated.

The other type discernible in the Hellenistic epigram diverges from the Ionic-Alexandrian type in essential characteristics. Its foremost representative is Leonidas of Tarentum. This type of epigram adheres more closely to actual inscriptions; sepulchral and votive epigrams predominate, and epigrams of wine and women are almost entirely wanting. It is partial to the treatment of the simple life of ordinary folk — artisans, peasants, shepherds, hunters, and fishermen; in this respect it is closely related to the bucolic poetry of Theocritus, with which it also shares love of rustic life. However, this simple material is presented not in the unadorned and lucid language of Asclepiades but in a pre-

[133] From *The Girdle of Aphrodite*, by F. A. Wright. Reprinted by permission of Messrs. George Routledge and Sons, Ltd.

tentious diction often difficult to understand. Unusual words and ingenious epithets are borrowed from epic, tragic, and lyric poetry. This branch of the epigram also lacks the compact brevity which is so characteristic of Asclepiades and Callimachus; it is richer in words and at the same time poorer in content. But to the literary gourmands of the Hellenistic period the contrast afforded by simple material clothed in ornate language was attractive. The influence of Leonidas on epigrammatic poetry was more enduring than that of Asclepiades and Callimachus.

The germ of the peculiarities characteristic of Leonidas is to be found in the Peloponnese, in the poetess Anyte of Tegea and in her imitators. Anyte, whose *floruit* appears to fall at the end of the fourth century, attained an astonishingly high reputation in later times. The " lilies of Anyte " are the first buds that Meleager weaves into his *Garland*, and a poet of the Augustan period goes so far as to name her the female Homer. This reputation is scarcely justified by the twenty epigrams extant. In addition to actual sepulchral and votive epigrams in the older style, she composed a number of inscriptions for dead animals, certainly fictitious. To be sure, in antiquity as in our own day, the dog and the horse, man's most loyal friends among the beasts, were honored by graves and epitaphs, but it is most unlikely that anyone ever erected a cenotaph for a cock that had been devoured by a fox and inscribed it with such feeling verses as these which Anyte composed:

Never more with flapping wing
Shalt thou rouse me from my bed
As the dawn is reddening
  Tyrant thou art dead
Lo the fox with stealthy bite
Slew thee as thou slept this night.
— F. A. WRIGHT [134]

Anyte also bestows her sympathy on creatures less familiar to man than the domestic cock. We have from her hand a dirge on a dead dolphin that had been washed up on the beach, and a dirge on a grasshopper and a cricket which children had kept in little cages as toys. Precisely such sentimental lamentation for more remote objects found great favor. The *Anthology* teems with poems on grasshoppers, crickets, partridges, swallows, dolphins; even an ant is accorded the honor of a sepulchral epigram. These animal epigrams express a love of nature which, in the case of Anyte at least, is still genuine; for the later poets the dead animals are simply a pretext for displaying their rhetorical skill. This love of nature is revealed also in several of Anyte's votive epigrams. Often the appearance of a votive offering is strictly maintained:

To shaggy Pan, and all the Wood-Nymphs fair,
Fast by the rock this grateful offering stands,

[134] From *The Poets of The Greek Anthology*, by F. A. Wright. Reprinted by permission of Messrs. George Routledge and Sons, Ltd.

A shepherd's gift — to those who gave him there
Rest, when he fainted in the sultry air;
And reached him sweetest water with their hands.
— John William Burgon

The poetess does not tell us what it is that the shepherd has offered. She is interested only in the little picture of nature, the fountain purling amid the sun-baked rocks near which the lonely shepherd feels with gratitude the sway of the kindly, life-giving divinities. Occasionally Anyte foregoes the proper wording of the consecration:

Come, stranger, come beneath this elm
  Where breezes soft caress;
And let the green of whispering leaves
  Assuage your weariness.
Drink to your fill of my cool fount,
  So fresh to wayworn feet,
And in the pleasure of my shade
  Forget the burning heat.
— F. A. Wright [135]

Who the speaker is in this epigram is obscure — the fountain nymph might be thought of. Really it is the poetess herself, who would again sing the praises of the combination of shady trees, cooling wind and fresh water. Even for the Turk of today the ideal of natural beauty is comprised in this triad.

[135] From *The Poets of The Greek Anthology*, by F. A. Wright. Reprinted by permission of Messrs. George Routledge and Sons, Ltd.

Grammatical and metrical constructions are simple in Anyte's poems, but her language is rich in unusual and sometimes newly coined words.

Anyte is not the only poetess of the early Hellenistic period. Hedyle, Moero of Byzantium, and Nossis of Locri in southern Italy were approximately her contemporaries. Of these the most interesting is, without doubt, Nossis, who appears to have composed real songs. Her epigrams occasionally show an individual tone:

Eros, sweetest of all! there is naught is lovely beside thee,
Nay, to the savour of love, honey is bitter to me.
Thus saith Nossis to man, 'If Cypris her kiss hath denied thee,
Then are the roses of life hidden for ever from thee.'
— J. A. Pott [136]

The rapturous praise of the ecstasy of love as sounded here by a woman is somewhat rare in Greek poetry. It can readily be understood, therefore, that Nossis felt herself spiritually akin to Sappho, as she openly declares in an epigram:

Go, stranger, go — and when to land you come,
Tell them in Locris here,
Far from the dances of your Lesbian home
There lives fair Sappho's peer.

[136] From *Greek Love Songs and Epigrams*, by J. A. Pott. Reprinted by permission of Messrs. Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner and Co.

Say that the Muses watched her grow,
And that men call her Nossis. Go.

— F. A. WRIGHT [137]

Like Nossis, Leonidas was a native of southern Italy, from the Dorian city Tarentum, which was then at the height of its bloom, a bloom later to be nipped by the Romans, during Leonidas' own lifetime. Leonidas had already composed poems for the Epirote king Neoptolemus, who was murdered about 295 by his fellow-king Pyrrhus; he is therefore older than Asclepiades. But he also wrote a dedicatory epigram for King Pyrrhus for a victory won in 274, and he lived to see the appearance of Aratus' didactic poem; he therefore must have survived at least into the sixties of the third century. He roamed much about the world and was unable to return to his native place, as he himself tells us in a fictitious inscription for his own tomb: [138]

Far, far from Italy my grave must be,
Far from my home I die;
'Tis bitterness more dread than death to me
In alien earth to lie.

But is not exile death? and yet I know
The Muses' love was mine,

[137] From *The Poets of The Greek Anthology*, by F. A. Wright. Reprinted by permission of Messrs. George Routledge and Sons, Ltd.

[138] Leonidas' authorship of this epigram has been wrongly denied. It surely shows his style. Callimachus composed a fictitious sepulchral inscription for himself; and Leonidas may well have known, when an old man, that he would die far from his native place.

They mingled honey in my cup of woe,
And sweetened all the wine.

Wherefore Leonidas shall be a name
To live beyond the grave;
Yea, till the sun be dark shall men acclaim
The gift the Muses gave.

— J. A. Pott [139]

We may also infer from one of his neatest poems that he remained a poor starveling all through his restless life:

Flee from my cabin, ye dark mice! Of need
The scanty meal-store knows not mice to feed.
Enough for self in salt and bread secur'd,
My old age from my sires such life endur'd.
Why mined each nook, thou lover of good cheer?
Nothing, not e'en a supper-crumb, is here!
To other houses speed — my means are slight —
There food in plenty will thy search requite.

— R. G. MacGregor

Leonidas did compose actual inscriptions for his native city and for the kings of Epirus, but these have least of his individual style, which stands out much more clearly in his fictitious sepulchral and votive inscriptions, which greatly predominate among the hundred epigrams extant. The scope of Leonidas' material is limited, and he seeks to add ever new charm to his little poems by surprising situations and

[139] From *Greek Love Songs and Epigrams*, by J. A. Pott. Reprinted by permission of Messrs. Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner and Co.

elaborate artistry of language. Such a method naturally involves repetition. In his sepulchral epigrams his labored search for singular situations often borders on the insipid. For example, he has a father set up a monument for his four daughters, all of whom are mentioned by name and have died in childbed, and then has the father himself die of sorrow and be buried in the same grave; this heaping up of lugubriousness has almost a burlesque effect.

He is even more grotesque when to the shopworn theme of the man that is drowned at sea he strives to add new attraction by having half the man devoured by a shark and the other half properly buried on land.

Among his many sepulchral inscriptions for poets ancient and modern one on the virulent Ionian Hipponax found especial favor, as is attested by the great number of imitations which followed it:

> Tread softly by Hipponax' tomb, nor dare
> To wake the bitter wasp that now doth sleep,
> For though the furious wrath that would not spare
> His nearest kin may seem to slumber deep,
> Yet venom from his burning words is shed,
> Beware the sting although the wasp is dead.
>
> — J. A. Pott [140]

But Leonidas' own individual province is the votive epigram for modest offerings of humble people. He is

[140] From *Greek Love Songs and Epigrams*, by J. A. Pott. Reprinted by permission of Messrs. Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner and Co.

unwearied in his representations of shepherds, hunters, fishermen, carpenters, spinning and weaving women offering to the gods their handiwork or the proceeds of their calling. In this connection he often presents agreeable rural pictures, closely following Anyte.[141] But his chief purpose is to exalt, by the use of high-sounding epithets, victuals and the implements of daily labor into a sphere which seemed poetic to him and to his contemporaries. This baroque style is really untranslatable, but in order to give a sample of its affectation I cite the epigram on the three nets which are offered by three brothers. It should be remarked, for the better understanding of the poem, that in antiquity nets were often used not only in fowling and fishing but also in hunting hares and other game:

> Three brothers dedicate, O Pan, to thee,
> Their nets, the various emblems of their toil;
> Pigres, who brings from realms of air his spoil,
> Dames, from woods, and Clitor from the sea.
> So may the treasures of the deep be given
> To this, to those the fruits of earth, and heaven.
>
> — J. H. Merivale

Leonidas was essentially not a poet but a virtuoso in the use of language; because he was such, he could be imitated much more easily than could Asclepiades or Callimachus. His influence on succeeding epigrammatists can be detected

[141] Following in Anyte's footsteps, he naturally also composed sepulchral poems for grasshoppers and crickets.

easily, but this influence was not to the advantage of epigrammatic poetry.

Of the numerous poets between Callimachus and Meleager we shall mention only a few. The most gifted of them was perhaps Dioscorides, who lived in Alexandria under Ptolemy Euergetes. Sometimes he quite achieves the light conversational tone of Asclepiades (his erotic poems are much more obscene); sometimes the mannerisms of Leonidas are noticeable. Of greatest interest to the classical scholar are his many epigrams on ancient and modern poets, of which I have cited above (p. 258) that on the comic poet Machon. These poems show an outspoken predilection, based on scholarly study, for the oldest dramatic poetry. There are also learned *Defenses;* he defends the daughter of Lycambes, who had died four hundred years before, against the attacks of Archilochus. The greatest incentive to imitation was afforded by his Spartan poems, which celebrated the ancient heroism of Spartan men and women in a decidedly romantic manner. I will cite at least one of them:

> Eight sons Damæneta at Sparta's call
> Sent forth to fight; one tomb received them all.
> No tear she shed, but shouted — "Victory!
> Sparta, I bore them but to die for thee."
>
> — G. S.

Alcaeus of Messene, who flourished about 200, is an interesting personality. Alone among the poets of the *Anthology,* he used the epigram as a political weapon, and this weapon

was feared even by kings and generals. Like many of his countrymen, he was enthusiastic over the brilliant young Macedonian king, Philip V. After Philip's first great success he was inspired to the following:

> Zeus! since by Philip scal'd Macynus' wall,
> Shut of the Blest the brazen portals all.
> Earth and the Sea now Philip's sceptre own,
> The road Olympus-ward remains alone.
>
> — R. G. MacGregor

But when Philip soon bitterly disillusioned the hopes of the Hellenes, Alcaeus' admiration turned to ardent hatred. The king was charged with having put some of his immediate followers out of the way by means of poison. The following epigram refers to this circumstance; its wild passion is reminiscent of the ancient poets Archilochus and Alcaeus:

> I'll drink, Lenæus! more than Cyclops e'er,
> Filling his paunch with human flesh as fare,
> I'll drink. O would, the bones of Philip's head
> First smash'd, that I could drink his brains instead,[142]
> Who pouring in a cup a comrade's blood
> Drank off as wine, and swore the med'cine good!
>
> — R. G. MacGregor

When Philip suffered a decisive defeat on the heights of Cynoscephalae at the hands of the Roman Titus Flamininus

[142] This gruesome picture is borrowed from the old Theban epic, where dying Tydeus sips the brain of his enemy, Melanippus, from his severed head.

in 197 and could not even give burial to his slain, Alcaeus puts a gruesomely mocking epigram into the mouths of the fallen Macedonians:

Unmourn'd, unburied, traveller, we lie,
Three myriad sons of fruitful Thessaly,
In this wide field of monumental clay.
Ætolian Mars had mark'd us for his prey;
Or he, who, bursting from th' Ausonian fold
In Titus' form, the waves of battle roll'd,
And taught Æmathia's boastful lord to run
So swift, that swiftest stags were by his speed undone.
— J. H. Merivale

This mockery so embittered the defeated Philip that he composed a biting epigram in return, which parodied the verses of his opponent:

Leafless, unbarked it stands, O thou who passest by,
The cross upon the hill where Alcaeus shall hang high.
— W. R. Paton [143]

But Alcaeus' epigram also gave offense to the other side. The Roman general Titus Flamininus quite naturally took it amiss that Alcaeus had put the Aetolians in the front rank of the victors — they had, to be sure, distinguished themselves in the battle — and only mentioned the Romans and their general in the second place. This circumstance brought about strained relations between Rome and her Aetolian allies.[144]

[143] From The Loeb Classical Library, reprinted by permission.
[144] The second objectionable distich is wanting in the *Anthology*,

When Flamininus solemnly proclaimed the freedom of the Hellenes at the Isthmian games in 196, Alcaeus sought to make reparation for the slight in a brief but effective epigram of homage, in which he purposely repeats, with slight alterations, a verse from the earlier poem:

Xerxes from Persia led his mighty host,
And Titus his from fair Italia's coast;
Both warr'd with Greece. But here the difference see;
That brought a yoke; this gives her liberty.
— J. H. Merivale

A hundred years later, Meleager of Gadara gathered his own and his predecessors' epigrams into his *Garland*. As a poet this industrious Syrian is no great light. He is skillful enough in polishing old motifs afresh and in varying them with the rhetorician's art, but he has scarcely anything new to say. For him a poem is never the sole and inevitable expression of a mood or a feeling; he could always express it otherwise. Indicative of this is the fact that he composed three separate sepulchral inscriptions for himself, which pour essentially the same content into three different moulds. To reward him, however, for preserving for us so many charming poems let us at least cite one of his sepulchral epigrams:

---

but Plutarch reports Flamininus' displeasure and quotes the distich. Apparently the poet later expunged it out of consideration for Rome, and thereby lessened the effectiveness of the poem.

My birthplace was of Syria,
The Attic haunt of Gadara;
My foster-nurse was island Tyre,
And Eucrates I own for sire.
By Muses' help the first to vie
With Menippean Graces, I
Am Meleager. Yes, and what
If Syrian? Stranger, marvel not.
Own we not all one common earth?
One chaos brought us all to birth.
Now full of years these lines I trace,
Here with my burial face to face:
In House of Eld who sojourneth
Hath for his next-door neighbour Death.
Bid an old garrulous man "good-bye";
Such garrulous age mayest thou enjoy.

— WALTER LEAF [145]

Philodemus, like Meleager, came from the Syrian city Gadara. He forms the bridge from the Hellenistic world to the Roman, and I therefore choose him to close this chapter. By vocation he was not a poet but an Epicurean philosopher. As such he sojourned for a long while in Rome and found a patron in L. Calpurnius Piso Caesoninus, the father-in-law of Caesar. He was respected in Roman society, and even Cicero, who was a bitter opponent of his patron, treated him with consideration. Very considerable fragments of his philosophical writings were found on papyrus in a villa in

[145] From *Little Poems from the Greek*, by Walter Leaf. Reprinted by permission of The Richards Press, Ltd.

Herculaneum, but from the point of view both of style and of content these writings are of little significance. He expatiates at great length on rhetoric, poetics, logic, music, and the various branches of ethics. Most of his material is obtained at second hand, and he clings to the teachings of his master with fanatical orthodoxy. Once he rises to this handsome utterance: "If Epicurus, Metrodorus, and Hermarchus prove that rhetoric is an art, then those (Epicureans) who write against it are not far removed from the crime of patricide." Much more attractive than his writings apparently was the man himself, for he succeeded in winning over to Epicureanism quite a number of the older Augustans, the friends of Vergil and Horace. It is hard for any reader of his philosophical writings to believe that the same man could also compose excellent epigrams. And yet Philodemus is the finest of the later epigrammatists, far superior to his countryman Meleager in vigor and conciseness. His epigrams, several of which, for example, were used by Ovid, are very lascivious but entirely original. I cite a poem which presents a bargain between a *bon vivant* and a courtesan; the tone is cynical, but the poem has vigor and the liveliness of a mime:

Good evening, miss. Good evening, sir, to you.
And what's your name? What's your's I'd like to know?
You're rather curious, miss. You're curious too.

Are you engaged? To any one I please.
Then sup with me: how much? No advance fees,
To-morrow you shall pay me at your ease.

Fair terms, my charmer; now when will you come?
Just when you please. At once? Well, you are *some;*
I'll tell you where I live, and you shall take me home.
— F. A. WRIGHT [146]

Finally I give a poem which he sends to his patron, Piso, inviting him to the celebration of Epicurus' birthday, the most important holiday of his school:

To Piso from his poet friend —
This letter, Sir, to you I send,
And beg you graciously to come
To-morrow to my humble home.

At four o'clock I you invite
To celebrate our annual rite;
A feast of friendship and of verse
Sweeter than Homer can rehearse.

'Tis true we have no vintage wine
Or fatted paunch whereon to dine.
Yet if you will but smile on me
Our meal a banquet soon will be.
— F. A. WRIGHT [147]

Many readers will perhaps be reminded by these lines of a similar poem in which Horace invites his patron, Maecenas, to a glass of *vin ordinaire,*[148] or, as it is perhaps more correctly supposed at present, in which he replies to an

[146] From *The Girdle of Aphrodite*, by F. A. Wright. Reprinted by permission of Messrs. George Routledge and Sons, Ltd.

[147] From *The Poets of The Greek Anthology*, by F. A. Wright. Reprinted by permission of Messrs. George Routledge and Sons, Ltd.

[148] *Carm.* 1. 20. 1: Vile potabis modicis Sabinum cantharis . . .

announcement of a visit from Maecenas. It is to be assumed that Horace was acquainted with Piso's epigram, but how much more dignity and self-respect Horace displays toward Maecenas than Philodemus toward Piso! The undisguised begging which the Greek permits himself at the close is unthinkable in Horace's poem.

Herewith Hellenistic poetry reaches its conclusion. The epigram is the only poetic form that maintained its own existence into the Augustan period and beyond, but even for it the period of bloom had passed two hundred years before. All the other forms of poetry had died earlier. The soil of Hellas, once so fruitful in products of the spirit, was become weary, like a field that has too long been tilled, and refused to continue yielding fruits of poetry. A new and virgin soil was needed to bring forth new fruits from Hellenistic seed, and this soil was provided by the Rome of Augustus.

LIST OF BOOKS

LIST OF BOOKS

Professor Körte did not include a bibliography in his work. The translators have appended a selected list of editions, translations, dissertations and articles which will be of service to those students who wish to investigate specific aspects of Hellenism and Hellenistic poetry.

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PART I: THE NEW COMEDY

Abbreviations: *A.J.P. = The American Journal of Philology; C.P. = Classical Philology; H.S.C.P. = Harvard Studies in Classical Philology; J.P. = The Journal of Philology; P.W. = Pauly-Wissowa-Kroll, Real-Encyclopädie der klassischen Altertumswissenschaft; Phil. = Philologus; R.M. = Rheinisches Museum, Neue Folge; T.A.P.A. = Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association.*

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2. The Epic

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b) Theocritus

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INDEX

INDEX

Aeschylus, 84, 85, 86, 93, 170, 260, 274
Agamemnon, 274
Persae, 170, 260
Aethiopis, 196
Agathias, 352
Agathon, 93
Alcaeus of Messene, 397–400
Alcaeus of Mitylene, 293, 356, 376, 398
Alcmaeonis, 164
Alexander of Pleuron, 88, 93
Alexander the Great, 3, 4, 29, 30, 83, 87, 90, 151, 261, 271, 273, 276, 376
Alexandria, 83–94
Library, 84–89
Museum, 84–90
Serapeum, 86
Alexandrian Philology, 87–88
Anaxilas, 15–17
Anthologia Palatina, 352
Anthology, 361, 390, 397
Antigonus Gonatas, 248
Antimachus, 95–96, 151, 178, 257, 362
Lyde, 95–96, 151, 362
Thebais, 151
Antiochus, 129, 249
Antiochus the Great, 165
Antipater, 30
Antiphanes, 18–19
Anyte, 389–92, 396 note
Apame, 129
Apollodorus (source of Nicander), 256
Apollodorus of Carystus, 49, 79
Apollonius of Rhodes, 91, 132, 133, 156, 176–243, 262, 283–84, 364
Aratus, 248–56, 393
Archilochus, 178, 356, 397, 398
Aristaenetus, 113
Aristarchus, 361
Aristophanes, 6, 7, 8, 9, 13, 14, 17–18, 25–26, 31, 35, 78, 84, 85, 90, 246, 293, 301
The Frogs, 6, 246
The Knights, 35
Peace, 85
Plutus, 14
Aristophanes of Byzantium, 25, 275
Aristotle, 31, 36, 85, 148, 150, 153, 231, 247
Ethics, 36
Poetics, 247
Arsinoë, 106–8, 145 note, 147, 307, 331 note
Artemidorus, 320
Asclepiades of Samos, 95, 297, 358–70, 371–72, 373, 374,

375, 376, 378, 379, 380, 383, 385, 388–89, 393, 396, 397
Attic Orators, 342
Atticists, 26
Augustan Poets, 5, 23, 165, 169, 402
Augustus, 3, 404
Avienus, 255

Bacchylides, 84, 85, 101
Battus, 99
Berenice, 129, 142–47, 379
Bion, 320–25
Björnson, 73
Böcklin, 175
Byron, 121

Caesar, 23, 243, 278, 401
Calderon, 24
Caligula, 351
Callimachus, 88–89, 90, 94, 95, 99–148, 150, 151–57, 160, 164, 165, 166, 168–69, 176–78, 191, 198, 213, 242, 243, 247–48, 249, 254, 280, 283–84, 307, 326, 327, 346, 359–60, 362, 366, 378–88, 389, 396, 397
Aitia, 109–21, 128, 154, 178
Arsinoë, 106–8, 147
Catalogue, 89, 106, 177
Epigrams, 99–100, 108–9, 152, 247–48, 359–60, 366, 378–88
Epinicion, 100–101
Hecale, 121, 153–57, 164, 213
Hymns: *To Apollo*, 129–33, 177, 307; *To Artemis*, 125–27; *The Bath of Pallas*, 121, 130; *To Delos*, 125, 127–28; *To Demeter*, 133–41, 307; *To Zeus*, 101–6, 108, 280
Iambi, 122–25, 327
Ibis, 133, 166, 177
The Lock of Berenice, 142–47
Catullus, 143, 147, 149, 169, 172
Choerilus of Iasos, 151
Choerilus of Samos, 151
Cicero, 165, 250, 255, 256, 355, 401
Cleanthes, 250, 370
Cleopatra, 5
Comedy, Alexandrian, 257–59
Comedy, Middle, 14–22, 27–30, 31
Comedy, New, 7, 8–9, 13–79, 197, 258–59, 261, 262, 310, 311, 335
Comedy, Old, 7–9, 13–14, 19, 22, 31, 35, 38, 85, 125, 148, 259, 262
Comedy, Roman, 23–25, 44, 335
Comedy of Manners, 8, 14, 22, 27
Conon, 142
Constantinus Cephalas, 352
Cratinus, 13, 85
Creophylus of Samos, 152
Crinagoras, 156
Critias, 95
Cyclic Epic, 150–52

Demetrius, Macedonian prince, 129
Demetrius of Phalerum, 30, 84
Demetrius Poliorcetes, 30–31
Demosthenes, 6, 336, 355

Dioscorides, 258–59, 397
Diphilus, 23, 27, 79
Drama, Alexandrian, 257–76
Droysen, 3
Dürer, 24

Elegy, Alexandrian, 94–150
Elegy, Roman, 149
Empedocles, 246, 252
Ennius, 109
Epic, Cyclic, 150–52
Epic, Didactic, 245–57
Epic, Heroic, 150–245
Epic, Homeric; *see* Homer
Epicurus, 403
Epigram, 146, 149, 205, 350–404
Eratosthenes, 148, 178
Erinna, 361–62
Eudoxus of Cnidus, 249, 251, 254
Euphorion, 165–69, 170, 273
Eupolis, 13, 85
Euripides, 6, 17, 19–22, 32, 62, 85, 86, 90, 188, 197, 218, 226–27, 347
Alope, 62
Auge, 17, 21
Bacchanals, 17
Helena, 20
Hippolytus, 20
Hypsipyle, 21
Ion, 20, 21
Iphigenia among the Taurians, 21
Medea, 17, 20, 218, 226
Orestes, 17
Stheneboea, 20

Flamininus Titus, 275, 398–400
Freytag, 49

Galen, 85, 255
Gallus, Cornelius, 149
Germanicus, 255
Goethe, 70, 150, 154, 213 note, 365
Grenfell Song, 347–50
Grimm brothers, 88

Hadrian, 149
Hauptmann, 19
Hedyle, 376, 392
Hedylus, 361, 371, 376–78
Hellenism, 3–9
Hellenistic Age, 5, 6, 7
Hermesianax, 96–97
Herodas, 200, 325–46, 347
The Dream, 325, 346
The Go-between, 328–35
The Jealous Woman, 345-46
The Pandar, 335–42
The Schoolmaster, 343
Women Making Offerings, 328, 343–45
Herodotus, 85, 151, 223, 237, 268, 269
Hesiod, 97, 102, 109, 110, 119, 121, 150–51, 178, 242, 245–47, 252
Theogony, 150
Works and Days, 246, 252
Hiero, 280, 282
Hilarody, 346–47, 350, 353
Hipparchus, 254–55
Hipponax, 122, 123, 327, 385, 395
Homer, 22, 25, 92, 103, 105, 110, 117, 122, 150–51, 152, 168–69, 172, 179, 184, 194, 198,

233, 241–42, 246–47, 255, 282, 293, 361
Iliad, 103, 117, 150, 152, 153, 178–79, 181, 196, 241, 245
Odyssey, 150, 153, 162, 178–79, 191, 194, 197, 233, 240–41, 249
Horace, 293, 359, 402, 403–4

Ibycus, 233
Immermann, 117

Justin II, 26
Justinian, 26, 352

Lachmann, 88
Lefebvre, 26
Leonidas of Tarentum, 254, 388–89, 393–97
Lessing, 25, 103, 352–53
Lope de Vega, 24, 31
Louis XIV, 90, 147
Lycophron, 88, 168, 260, 261–76
Cassandreis, 260
Menedemus, 261
Lysias, 336

Machon, 258–59, 397
Maecenas, 403–4
Magas, 129
Magody, 347
Margites, 150
Martial, 353
Meleager, 351, 352, 356, 357, 371, 372, 376, 389, 397, 400–401, 402
Menander, 7, 8, 14–15, 22–79, 84, 92, 258, 310
Anger, 31
Arbitrants, 27, 35–36, 49–79
The Farmer, 27, 32–35
The Flatterer, 27
The Girl with Shorn Locks, 27, 28, 38–43, 48
The Hated Man, 27, 44
The Hero, 32–35, 44–48
Mime, The, 276–350
Moero of Byzantium, 392
Molière, 24–25
Moschion, 260
Moschus, 169–76, 320

Nicander, 256–57
Niebuhr, 275
Nossis, 392–93

Octavia, 260
Ovid, 25, 96, 113, 118, 120, 133, 147–48, 149, 154, 170, 402
Heroides, 113
Ibis, 133
Metamorphoses, 120

Panyassis, 151
Paraclausithyron, 293, 294, 348, 367, 368, 387
Parmenides, 246
Parthenius, 148–49, 152
Paul, Apostle, 103, 255
Pausanias, 243, 244, 245
Phanocles, 97–99
Philemon, 23, 27, 79
Philetas, 96–97, 168, 297, 358
Philip I of Macedonia, 30
Philip V of Macedonia, 257, 398–99

Philippus of Thessalonica, 351
Philodemus, 401–4
Philology, Alexandrian, 88–89
Phrynichus, critic of Menander, 26
Phrynichus, tragic poet, 260
Pindar, 84, 85, 93, 101, 130, 157, 160, 245 note
Piso, 401, 403–4
Platen, 262
Plato, 6, 277, 307, 355, 357–58
  Epigrams, 357–58
Plautus, 20, 23–25, 78
  Aulularia, 25
  Menaechmi, 24
  Persa, 20
Pleiad, Alexandrian, 259–61
Pleiad, French, 260
Plutarch, 25, 400 note
Pollianus, 148
Pope, 327
Poseidippus, 359, 361, 370–76
Praxiteles, 23, 328
Propertius, 96, 109, 149
Ptolemy I Soter, 83–84, 105, 258
Ptolemy II Philadelphus, 83, 86, 105, 129, 275, 282, 331 note
Ptolemy III Euergetes, 85, 129, 142, 144 note, 177, 326, 331 note, 379, 397
Pyrrhus, 276, 393

Quintilian, 165

Rhianus, 243–45
Ronsard, 260

Sappho, 93, 206, 307, 319, 356, 374–75, 392
Satyr Play, Alexandrian, 261–62
Schiller, 177, 355
Schlegel, 120, 133, 177
Seleucus, 142
Seneca, 260
Shakespeare, 24
Simonides, 233, 356
Socrates, 93
Solon, 94
Sophocles, 6, 9, 86, 90, 197
Sophron, 276–77, 279, 285, 310–11, 328
Sositheus, 261
Spenser, 327
Sulla, 320, 351

Terence, 23–24, 49, 79
Thais, 29
Theocritus, 94, 96, 152, 157–64, 169–70, 180 note, 193, 200, 279–320, 321, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 334, 346, 347, 348, 358–59, 366, 388
  Charites, 280–83, 320
  A Country Singing Match, 292
  The Distaff, 284
  The Harvest-Home, 284, 297–301, 311, 358
  Heracles, 161–64
  Heracliscus, 157–61, 169
  Hylas, 193
  The Incantation, 310–19, 327, 329, 334, 366
  The Love of Cynisca, 308–10, 311
  The Panegyric of Ptolemy, 282–83, 310, 320
  The Serenade, 293–97

The Two Herdsmen, 286–91
Women at the Feast of Adonis, 301–8, 321, 334, 348
Theophrastus, 31, 36, 84
Thucydides, 85
Tiberius, 149, 165
Tibullus, 149
Tieck, 88, 119, 120
Timaeus, 231, 266
Timocreon, 356
Timon of Phlius, 86–87
Tragedy, Alexandrian, 259–74

Uhland, 88

Valerius Flaccus, 243
Varro, Terentius "Atacinus," 243
Vergil, 149, 179, 184, 190, 197–98, 213, 217–18, 241–42, 257, 286, 298, 320, 402
Aeneid, 179, 190, 197, 213, 241
Eclogues, 298, 320
Georgics, 149, 257
Veronese, Paolo, 170

Wolff, 245

Xenophanes, 94, 246

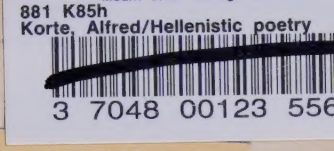
Zeno, 248, 370
Zenodotus, 88, 177
Zola, 345

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